APRIL 1988

COMMODORE USER

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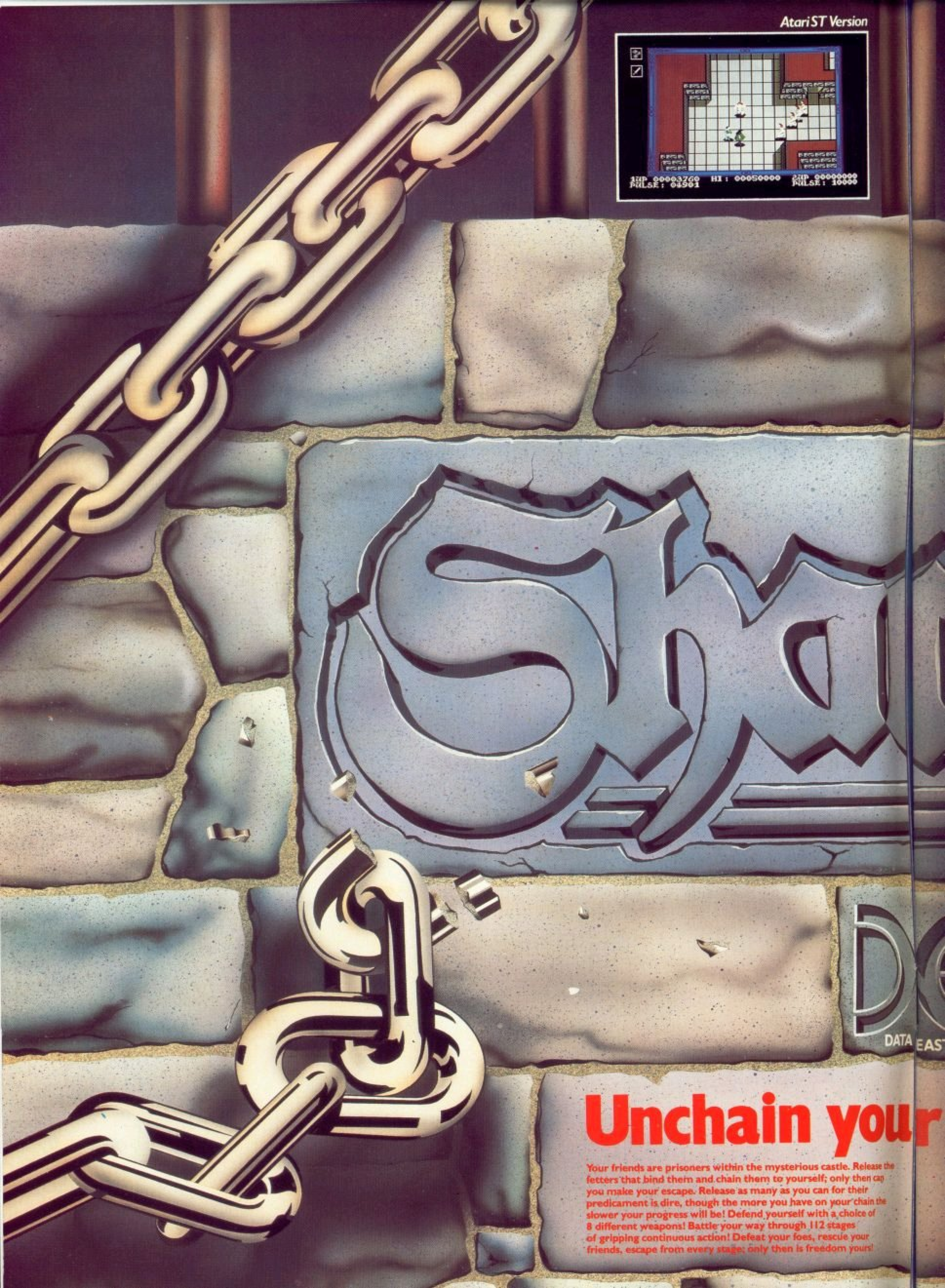
REVIEWED: RIMRUNNER

ARKANOID-REVENGE OF DOH

A.T.F & PACLAND

WIN A YAMAHA KEYBOARD

28 PAGE AMIGA PULL-OUT SPECIAL



Atari ST Version
1UP 00003760 HI : 00050000 2UP 00000000
PULSE : 04901 PULSE : 10000
DATA EAST
Unchain your
Your friends are prisoners within the mysterious castle. Release the fetters that bind them and chain them to yourself; only then can you make your escape. Release as many as you can for their predicament is dire, though the more you have on your chain the slower your progress will be! Defend yourself with a choice of 8 different weapons! Battle your way through 112 stages of gripping continuous action! Defeat your foes, rescue your friends, escape from every stage; only then is freedom yours!


Spectrum 48k Version
Arcade Version
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DATA EAST
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CBM 64/128·
Spectrum 48K/128K+2·
Spectrum+3·MSX

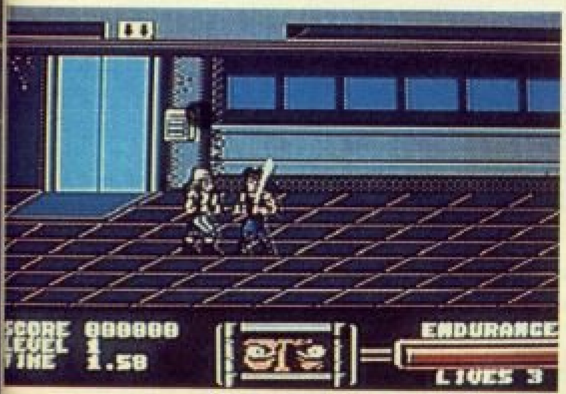


SOLDIER OF LIGHT
TAITO
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C64/AMSTRAD 8.99
DISC 14.99
ACE
screenshots from arcade machine
IT'S HOT!
Red hot from the arcades, this official Taito coin-op conversion is the greatest blast around!
Xain, your mission is to rid the galaxy of all the Federation's enemies!
Planet after planet of the greatest action you've ever experienced, and the most brilliant graphics you've ever seen!
ACE: the new name for the best in coin-ops!
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Specials

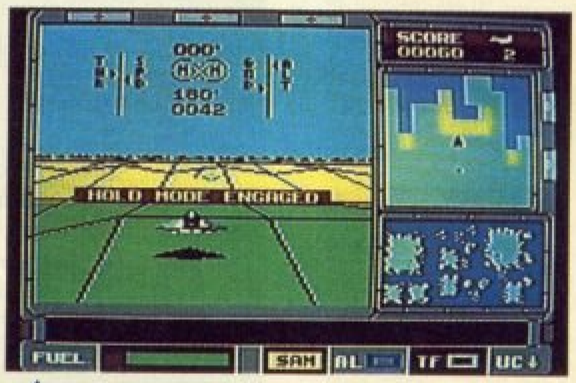




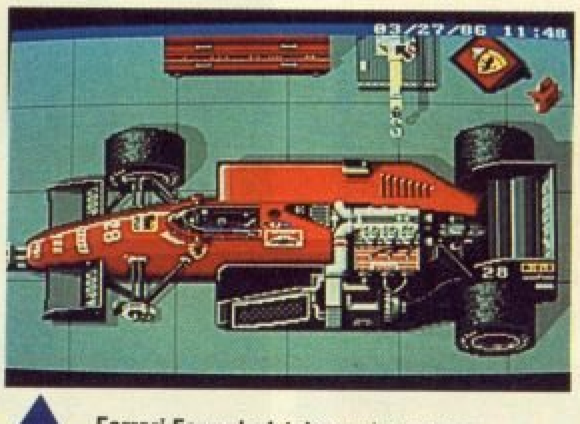
Target Renegade *lays into the opposition.*



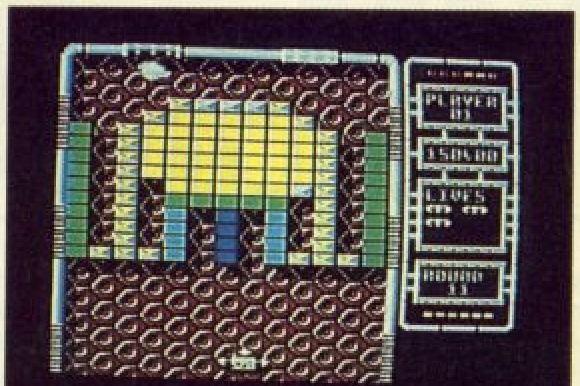
Head-chopping returns — Barbarian *arrives on the Amiga.*



ATF *homes in from Digital Integration.*



Ferrari Formula 1 *takes pole position.*



Arkanoid — Revenge of Doh. *Another Vaus for your mouse.*

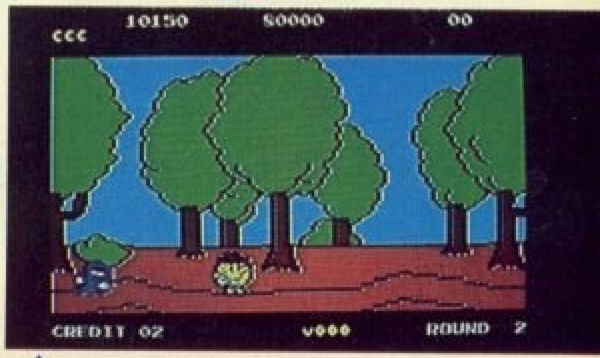
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Cover Illustration: Philip Bond

ABC
MEMBER OF THE AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS
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Regulars

Screen Scene

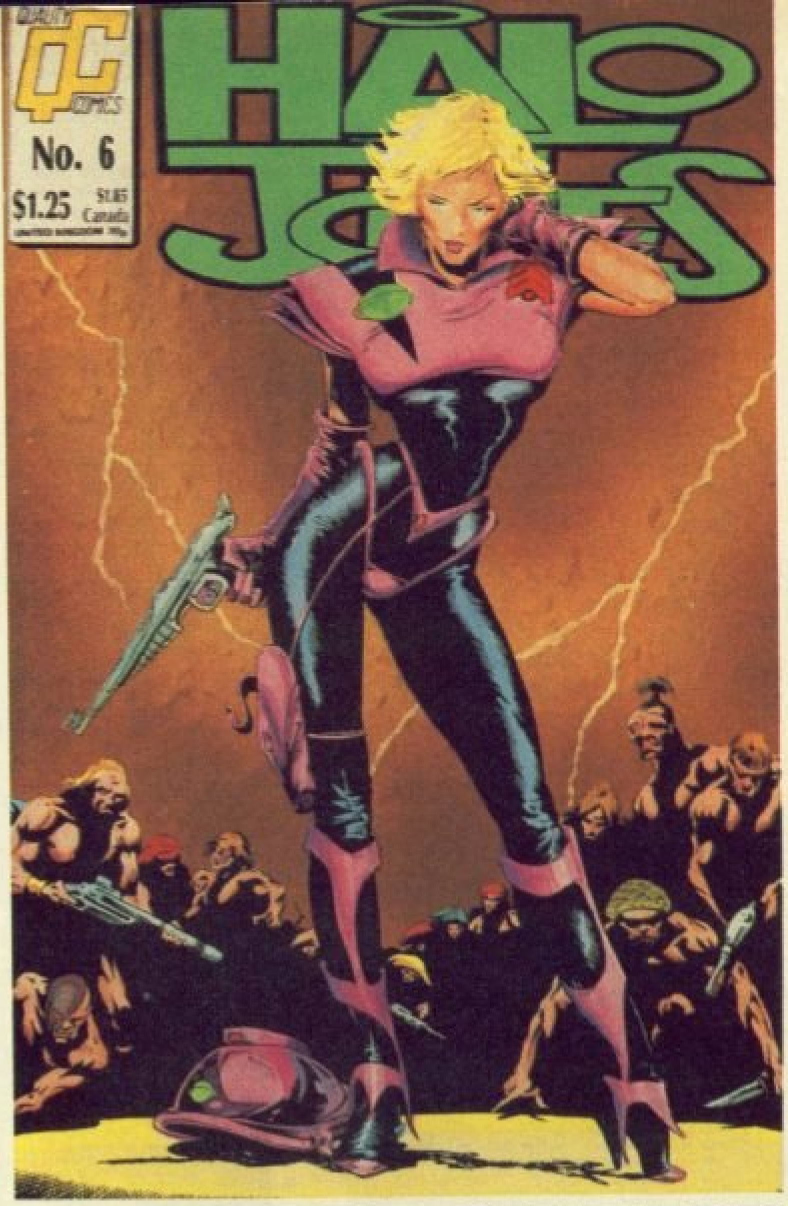


Blood Valley — *role playing action from Gremlin.*





BUZZ





MANSELL QUALIFIES

With this year's Grand Prix season edging ever-closer, doubts are being expressed as to whether Martech's long-awaited *Nigel Mansell* licence is going to materialise on the 64 in time for the second Grand Prix of the year in Mexico on April 3.

Originally due out in November 1987, it appears that the 64 version of the game has been hit by the old "programming problem" bug, although the finished product has just appeared on other formats.

According to Martech's David Martin, "while there have been terrific delays on the 64, we're still hoping that it'll be ready in time for an Easter launch. We are getting very close to completion now, so we're just keeping our fingers crossed".

Us too, Dave, us too.

HOOPS THAT GIRL

Where is she? We've been counting the moments until that wonderous woman, Halo Jones, finally steps out of the pages of Alan Moore's futuristic cartoon world, the Hoop, and onto the screens of a nation's 64s. It was back in December that we first told you that Halo was a comin' your way, courtesy of Piranha. Eventually our daily weeping phone calls to Piranha HQ have yielded the following horrific information: *The Ballad Of Halo Jones hasn't even begun* to be programmed on the 64. The powers that be have decided in their wisdom to complete the Amstrad and (ughhh) Speccy versions before even embarking on the 64 work, so we won't be likely to be seeing our 'Alo much before June. June!! So, just to keep y'all going till then we thought we'd just print a glorious technicolour cut-out-'n'-stuff-under-your-pillow pic of the woman herself.

ROBOCOP COIN-OP



News reaches us that we may soon be seeing an *arcade* game based on the brilliant cop-schlock movie *Robocop*. As already revealed in Buzz, Ocean are to convert the Paul Verhoeven movie, set in the strife-torn Detroit of the near-future, for the home market. But it now transpires that the shrewd Manchester-based company's deal effectively prevents anyone but them from converting — or granting licences to convert — the movie for the coin-op market. Buzz understands that negotiations are currently underway between Ocean and a certain leading coin-op company which seem likely to lead to a coin-op *Robocop* hitting the streets over the coming months. You heard it here first.

BUZZ



ON COLLISION COURSE

The skies over London are chock-a-block full of shiny metal and the papers daily report of "air misses" due to computer failure, overcrowded airlanes, not-very-state-of-the-art radar equipment and not-very-awake air traffic controllers. So what better time for Hewson to announce the release of an air traffic control sim.

In *Heathrow International Air Traffic Control*, you get to take over from those overworked, underpaid and highly stressed folk in the control towers who are given the responsibility of ensuring that all the hundreds of aircraft which converge over London get themselves into neat orderly queues for landing. You get half an hour to land any one of a whole variety of aircraft, including Concorde, and you'd better be prepared for emergency landings, radar interference, abortive take-offs, aircraft running short of fuel and, of course, the much talked-about "air miss" (where two aircraft find themselves travelling on collision course and are forced to take unplanned evasive action).

So drape your jacket over that chair, wipe that sweat from your brow, and keep your eyes on that screen; remember, it's their lives in your hands — poor ol' them!

JIM'LL FIX IT

MASTERTRONIC FIX-UP

Who says those big impersonal software houses are . . . well, big and impersonal, really? *You do*? Well, prepare to eat those words, buddy, 'cos here's a story that'll touch you to the bottom of your heart.

Once upon a time a young man by the name of Andrew Collett decided that, at eight years old, it was high time that he had a computer game based on his ideas made available to the general public. So he wrote to the Beeb's answer to the lamp genie, Jimmy Saville, and asked if he could "fixit" for Andy's game concept, *Super Trolley*, to be transformed into a real, live, commercially retailed game.

Well, seems that Jimbo liked the idea, and got in touch with those big-hearted folk at Mastertronic and persuaded them to produce it.

The hero of *Super Trolley* works in a supermarket, and is in charge of shelf-stacking and other like tasks, all of which have to be carried out within a time limit.

Anybody who was watching "Jim'll Fix It" on the goggle-box on Saturday March 12 will have seen how Jim, and Mastertronic, fixed it for Andrew. And if you'd like to invest in *Super Trolley*, it is due out any day now, and will retail for the sum of £1.99, on, of course, the Mastertronic label. And, just in case you're not alredy felling all soft and mushy, all of Andrew's royalties from sales of the game are going to the Great Ormand Street hospital for sick children.

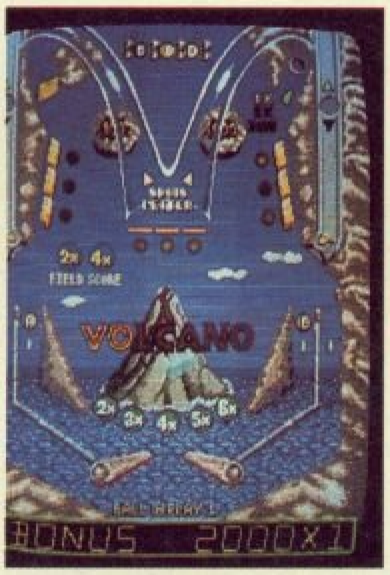
ROBTEK TERMINATING LICENCE

Robtek have acquired a licence to bring out a conversion of the old Arnie Schwarzenneger blockbuster, *Terminator*.

Apparently Robtek have an arrangement with an American organisation, Key-punch, whereby the Americans set up three film licences for Robtek over the course of a year. And so it came to pass that, around Christmastime, Keypunch picked up the rights to this classic, if now a wee bit dated, Arnie action pic for Robtek.

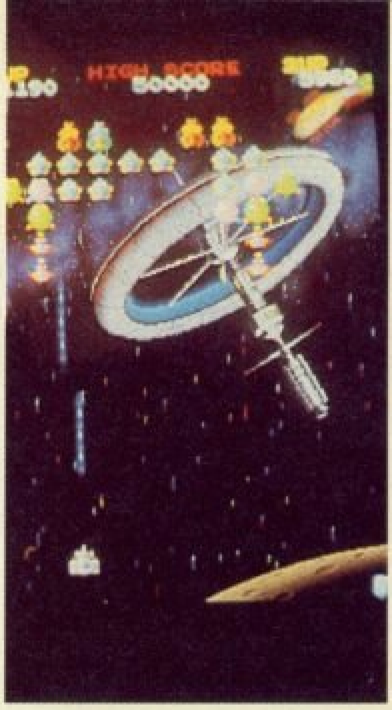
According to a spokesman for the company, we should see their conversion of *Terminator*, on their Diamond Games label, out on the streets around Autumntime. It It will definitely be released for Amiga, and possibly also for the 64.





TIME SCANNER SIGNED

Activision have just announced that Autumn will see the release for the home market of their conversion of the fab Sega pinball coin-op, *Time Scanner*. With incredibly realistic flipper, bump-bar and ball movement, *Time Scanner* will be a must for all those people who've always wanted a pin-table in their bedroom but couldn't afford one or couldn't get it through the door.



ARCADE AVERAGE

With all these recent updates of classic coin-op games being churned out, it was only a matter of time before someone started producing real lemons, taking old games, tarting up the graphics and presenting them as bionic versions of the originals. *Galaga '88*, by Namco, takes the classic *Galaga* formula, and . . . well, doesn't really do very much with it, apart from sticking fairly mundane new backdrops on and adding a couple of piffling enhancements. It's not that it's *bad*, so much as that it's just nothing very much *different* from what went before. Still, we bet you'll be seeing a lot more of these as other coin-op companies hop on the "ten years later" bandwagon. Be warned.

COMMODORE CELEBRITIES SHOW-UP

This year's Commodore Show, which will be held at the Novotel, Hammersmith, from Friday June 3 to Sunday June 5, will be featuring some special guests as well as the usual array of stalls and exhibitors. According to organisers Database, there will be personal appearances by Olympic Gold Medal Javalin-thrower Tessa Saunderson, wrinkly '60's pop idol Adam Faith and "big names from Chelsea FC" (if there are any left). And, if *that* isn't enough to set your pulses racing, there are also some "mystery guest appearances" promised. All this and a feast of wonderous computer mayhem too — who could ask for anything more?

BUZZ

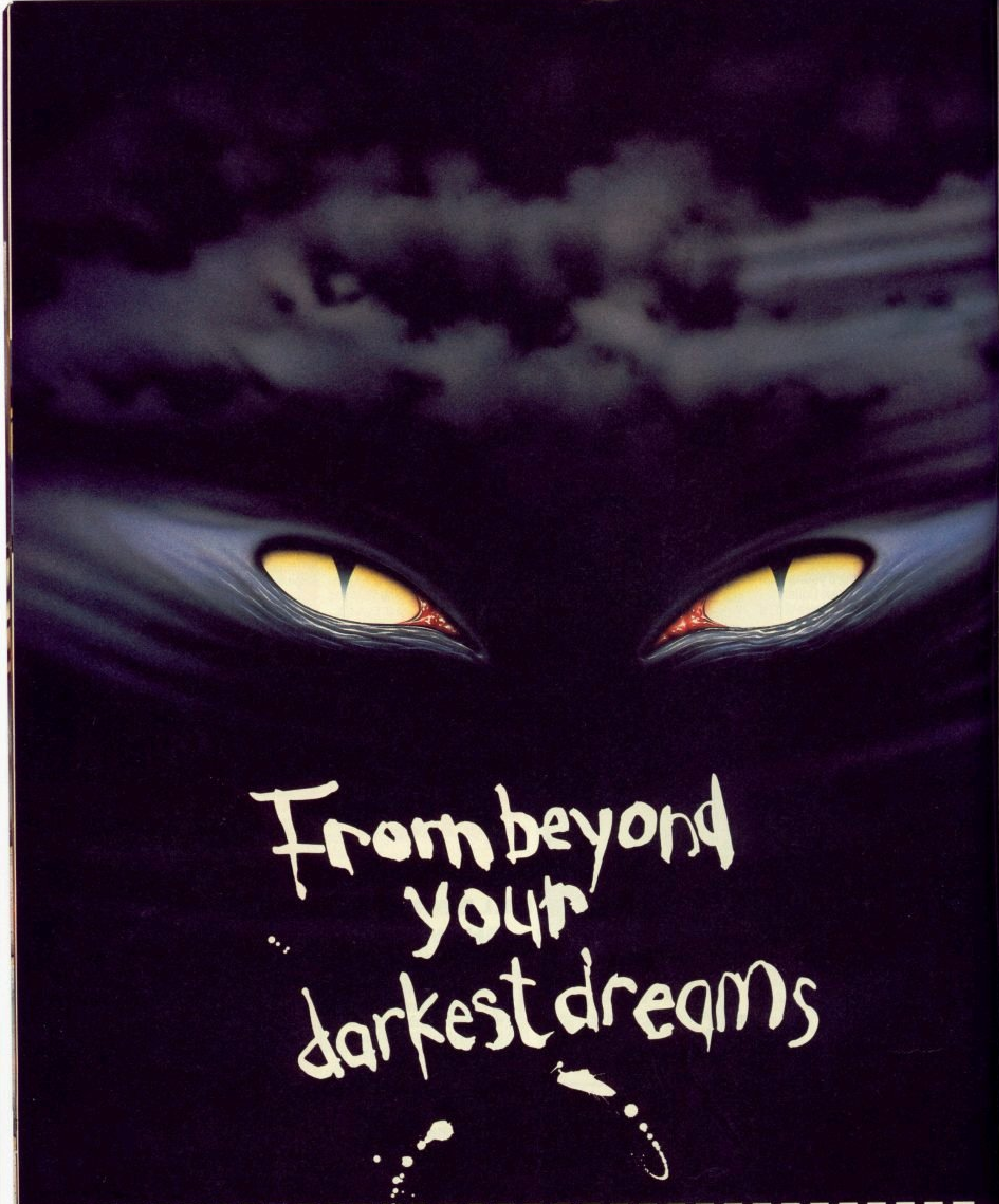
Activision To Distribute Microillusions: **Top US softco Microillusions have just signed an agreement with Activision which will result in Microillusions products becoming available over here for the first time. This month will see the UK release of four of their games. *Blackjack Academy* (a card-playing game), *Firepower* (a tank fighting game), *Faerytale Adventure* (a fantasy role-playing game) and the interesting-sounding *Romantic encounters* (in which your objective is to find your life partner!) will all be selling at a softshop near you real soon.**

September Cancelled: **"Will you still be playing it next September?" went the adverts. Alas, alack, you won't even by playing it this September, because Activision have just announced that their long-awaited *September* has been indefinitely shelved. According to a spokesperson, the code which the programmers came up with "just wasn't up to scratch for a full price game". However *September* may be included in a future Activision compilation.**

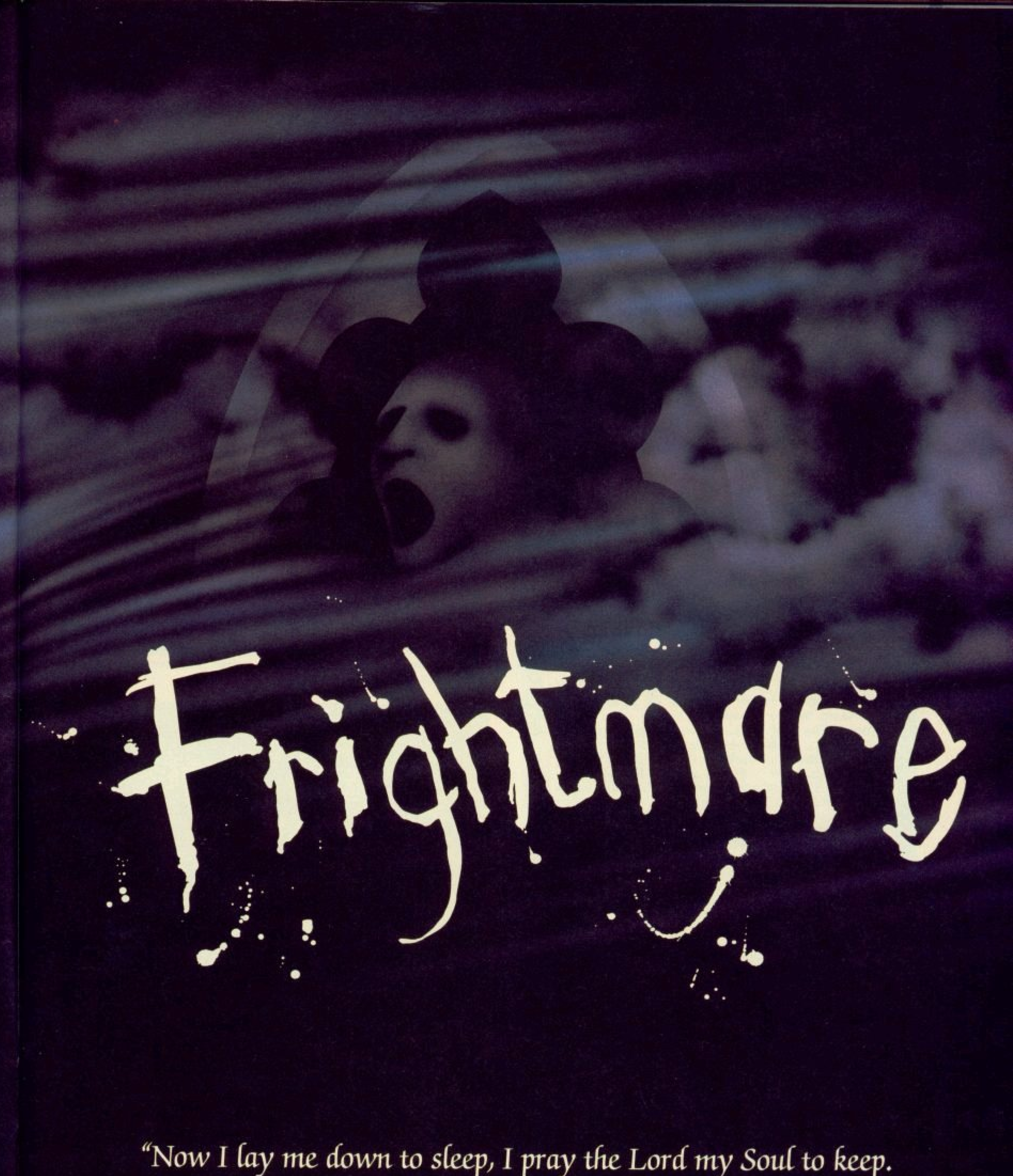
Ocean Easter Package: **Ocean software have just announced a truly fab compilation which will be in the stores for Easter. *We Are The Champions* will feature five games in a twin cassette box, retailing at £9.95, and on a single disk at £14.95. The games featured are System 3's *International Karate +*, *Renegade* (Imagine), *Barbarian* (Palace), *Rampage* (Activision) and *Super Sprint* (Electric Dreams).**

Five Of The Best: Computer Classics**, from Beau Jolly, has just hit the streets and with *Into The Eagle's Nest, Dynamite Dan, Aliens, Cauldron II* and *Zynaps* all featured on one cassette, retailing at a measly £6.99, how can you go wrong?**

3-D Dungeons: **For those of you who enjoy large dollops of fantasy mixed in with your day-to-day existences, Mirrorsoft have announced that May will see the release here, on Amiga, of American company FTL's *Dungeon Master*. With high detail 3-D graphics and digitised sound, *Dungeon Master* sets you the task of retrieving the Grey Lord's all-powerful Firestaff from the dungeon controlled by the evil Lord Chaos. You have the choice of 24 champions, twelve levels and as many traps, puzzles and riddles as you could possibly desire.**



From beyond your darkest dreams



"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my Soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my Soul to take …"



Frightmare – A computer game for the Commodore 64, Spectrum, Amstrad and soon on the IBM PC. Cassette £9.95. Disk £14.95 (IBM £19.95).
Cascade Games Ltd., 1–3 Haywra Crescent, Harrogate, N. Yorks. Tel: 0423 525325. Fax: 0423 530054.

BUZZ



VINDICATOR: GREEN BERET II

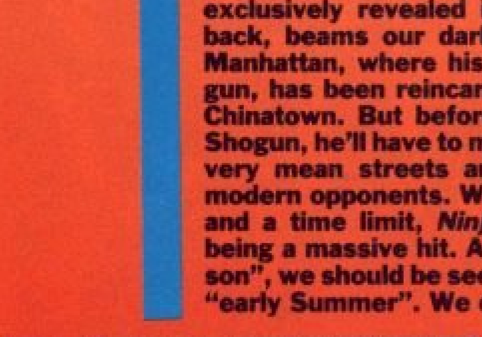
It's not today or yesterday that Imagine brought out their conversion of the Konami coin-op smash, *Green Beret.* In fact it's almost two years since CU featured the commando shoot 'em up on its cover. About time for a sequel, eh? Well, that's what Imagine think too — sort of. Y'see, while *Vindicator: Green Beret II* features the same lone hero, the Ocean programmers on the case have developed a completely new set of scenarios, à la *Platoon,* with vertically-scrolling and head-on sections as well as the old horizontally-scrolling sequences. Your hero'll find himself in aircraft, tunnels, crossing railway tracks and bridges, in his quest to find and neutralise an atomic warhead. And the graphics, according to the responsible press persons, are well brilliant.



NINJA II

O.K., O.K., you nosey bunch, we know you all really want a sneak preview of System 3's follow-up to the arcade adventure of the milleneum *The Last Ninja* — so here it is! *Ninja II,* as exclusively revealed in Buzz a coupla months back, beams our dark-clad hero into latterday Manhattan, where his old enemy, the evil Shogun, has been reincarnated as a Tong leader in Chinatown. But before he gets anywhere near Shogun, he'll have to make his way through some very mean streets and past some very nasty modern opponents. With numerous refinements and a time limit, *Ninja II* shows every sign of being a massive hit. According to a "spokesperson", we should be seeing the finished product in "early Summer". We can't wait.





SUPER HANG-ON

VEEEE . . . OWWWW! one minute a mere spot on the horizon, the next zooming right into your living room and onto the screen of your 64. It's the conversion-of-the-update-of-the-coin-op-hit-of-the-sport, *Super Hang-On,* brought to you courtesy of Electric Dreams. We can't promise you that you'll get to sit astride a mega-impressive motor-bike console as you play like Sega gave you in the arcades, but we're sure that anybody who's into experiencing the thrills, spills, tyre-squeals and fast-wheels of motorcycle racing will be more than happy to give this a go or two trillion in the privacy of their own homes. Due out nowabouts on the 64, for speedfreaks, actual and would-be, everywhere.

GAMES — WINTER EDITION

Think Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards is really a bit of a turkey, huh? And you think you might be able to do a wee bit better than purvlicious Katrina Witt on the ice too, do you? Well Epyx are giving you a chance to put your joystick where your mouth is with their latest sports sim, *Games — Winter Edition.* The creators of the Crucial Poll-topping *California Games* reckon that this one's going to do at least as well. You get to compete in all the best-known *Winter Olympic* events, including Luge, Speed and Figure Skating, Cross-country and Downhill skiing and, of course, Eddie's speciality, the Ski Jump. And what's more, you won't have to dress up in yucko polyester costumes and expose your poor little bod to the elements like the real snow'n'ice crew have to.

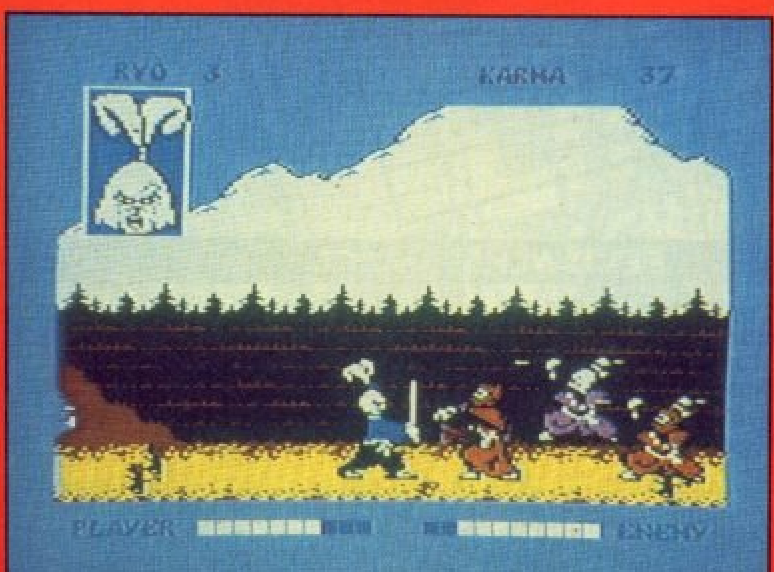
RING WARS

Well, we've heard of our solar system coming under attack from aliens and even the occasional meteorite, but never of an invasion of an enormous fleet of other *Worlds!* Still, you learn something new very day, and today we learned that Cascade's forthcoming *Ring Wars* features just this scenario, with hordes of these most unusual nasties threatening the existence of our home group of planets. Your squadron has been scrambled to try and avert this catastrophe. Through this 3-D vector spacescape you've got to roam, taking out the most immediate threats first. But the only long-term solution is to get right into the heart of the incoming mass, and destroy it (*but how can a large random group of so-called "ring worlds" have a "heart"? — millions of readers*) Oh, just you wait and see . . .



SAMURAI WARRIOR

No, it's not "just another Samurai game", for the hero of Firebird's *Samuari Warrior — The Battles Of Usagi Yojimbo* is, in fact, a rabbit. Yes, you heard us correctly, Usagi Yojimbo is possessed of long floppy ears, a small bushy tail — and, of course, a pair of death-dealing blades. Based on the cult comic series, *Samurai Warrior* is set in the troubled world of early seventeenth century Japan. Usagi's panda master, Lord Noriyuki of the geisha clan, has been abducted by a combined force of ninja and bandits, and Usagi is in hot pursuit. Lord Noriyuki is being brought to the evil Lord Hikiji's castle where he's liable to be subjected to some decidedly non-RSPCA-approved treatment, unless you can save him and vanquish the foe. This, erm, somewhat unusual graphic adventure thingie with be with y'all this month.





ALIEN SYNDROME

Ughhhh . . . what are *those* things??? Better shape up, matey, those big kidney shaped blobs are aliens, and you're wandering around their spaceship, and they don't like it one little bit. The Edge's conversion of the Sega coin-op hit *Alien Syndrome* will be on the shelves in a matter of weeks, and should feature all the stomach-churning action of the original, with swarms of disgusting grunt aliens for you and your mate to diss and plenty of special weapons for you to locate, access and use to help you in your task, not to mention the hideous composite master aliens — y'know, the ones which you think you've destroyed when really you've just freed their malevolent head-sections to chase you about. There are seven levels for you to compete, and you can't afford to get complacent — with the built-in time limit on each level, tarry too long and it's *BOOOOOM* . . .



SOLDIER OF LIGHT

Who are you? Why, you're Xain. And why are you hovering about on our screens? Well, it's because you've been given the responsibility of defending all planets against the empire's invasion. which planets? Which empire? Which invasion? Erm . ... we're not sure exactly — the loading screen didn't say anything about that. But the main piece of information we're trying to get into your skulls is that The Edge's *Soldier Of Light*, converted from the cultish Taito coin-op, is winging its way to you. You play a small ironclad soldier figure who, by virtue of a pair of v. useful jet-boots, gets to bounce horizontally through screen-loads of rebel warriors, pumping 'em full of photon death. With five planets to choose from, sounds like you've got your work cut out, Xain, mate.

CHAR

C64 CHART

TM	LM		
1	2	PLATOON	OCEAN
2	NE	GHOSTBUSTERS	RICOCHET
3	NE	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	RICOCHET
4	NE	I BALL 2	FIREBIRD
5	1	OUT RUN	SEGA-US GOLD
6	16	PROJECT STEALTH FIGHTER	MICROPROSE
7	12	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
8	NE	PREDATOR	ACTIVISION
9	10	TRAP DOOR	ALTERNATIVE
10	17	SOCCER BOSS	ALTERNATIVE
11	13	KICK START 2	MASTERTRONIC
12	NE	BMX KIDS	FIREBIRD
13	NE	4th & INCHES	ACCOLADE-US GOLD
14	5	TEST DRIVE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
15	3	MATCH DAY 2	OCEAN
16	6	ATV SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
17	15	POPEYE	ALTERNATIVE
18	9	GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
19	NE	ZYBEX	ZEPPELIN
20	NE	FAMOUS COURSES VOL. 1	ACCESS-US GOLD

ADVENTURE CHART

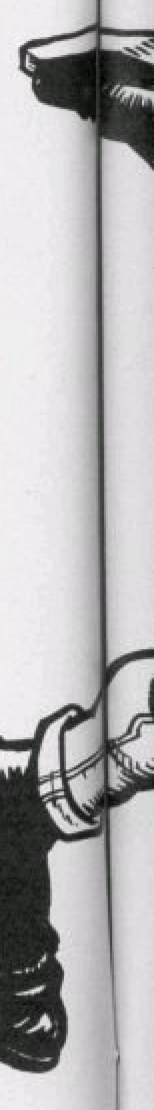
TM	LM		
1	1	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
2	NE	BARD'S TALE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
3	NE	JINXTER	RAINBIRD
4	5	GUILD OF THIEVES	RAINBIRD
5	RE	LORD OF THE RINGS	MELBOURNE HOUSE
6	6	GNOME RANGER	LEVEL 9
7	9	KNIGHT ORC	RAINBIRD
8	10	PAWN	RAINBIRD
9	2	KOBYASHI	MASTERTRONIC
10	RE	STAR WRECK	ALTERNATIVE

TOP TEN REVIEWER'S SNACKS

1. BRANSTON PICKLE (Cheese roll optional) — Just what the Ed likes to get his teeth into (when's he's finished with the contributors, of course).
2. RAISIN & BISCUIT YORKIE — "Truly Scrumptious" (G. Penn, 1988)
3. CHOCOLATE & ALMOND DOUGHNUT — Keeps the Fat Lady Singing!
4. MARS BAR — Out of this world.
5. TOFFEE CRISP — The dentist's friend.
6. TREBOR EXTRA STRONG MINTS — Essential for morning-after breath.
7. K.P. SALT 'N' VINEGAR CRISPS — work yourself up a thirst.
8. RICE CAKES — the designer snack.
9. HUMBLE PIE — Scrivo the Ad Man's favourite.
10. TENNENT'S EXTRA — there's no such thing as dry lunch.

AMIGA CHART

TM	LM		
1	NE	ROAD WARS	MELBOURNE HOUSE
2	1	XENON	MELBOURNE HOUSE
3	NE	STAR WARS	DOMARK
4	NE	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC
5	2	GARRISON	RAINBOW ARTS
6	NE	KING OF CHICAGO	MIRRORSOFT
7	3	TEST DRIVE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
8	NE	XR-35	ANCO
9	NE	WINTER OLYMPIAD	TYNESOFT
10	NE	MERCENARY COMPENDIUM	NOVAGEN



REVIEWERS' CHOICE

What's occupying the CU Crew's leisure time?
Mike Pattenden: *Target Renegade (64), Ferrari Formula 1* (Amiga), *Love and Rockets — Book 3.* Gary Penn: *Barbarian* (Amiga), *Arkanoid* (Amiga), acting the maggot. Nick Kelly: *Chelnov* (coin-op), *Arkanoid* (Amiga), snapping guitar strings. Mark Patterson: *Rimrunner (64), Bubble Bobble* (Amiga), taking afternoons off.

RTS

READERS COIN-OP CHART

TM	LM	
1	3	AFTER BURNER
2	1	OUT RUN
3	2	DOUBLE DRAGON
4	RE	WEC LE MANS
5	NE	PACMANIA

Well, well, well, *Afterburner* blasts its way back to the top, leaving the long-running *Out Run* at number 2. Surprise re-entry by Konami's *Wec Le Mans* and a new entry from one of the current batch of "update" games, *Pacmania*. Keep those top fives comin', people, to Readers Coin-op Chart, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

CHART CHAT

Finally, *Out Run* does what the critics thought it should have done weeks ago and drops from number one, all the way to number five, in fact. Its place has justifiably been taken over by the superb Ocean 'Nam game with a difference, *Platoon*. As predicted last month, the cheapos are once again reasserting themselves. And amongst the new full-pricers, Activision's *Predator* goes straight into the top ten, while Nick Kelly's favourite American footballism, *4th & Inches* makes its first showing at number 13. No change at the top of the adventure charts, with Mirrorsoft's *Defender* holding firm, but there are two strong new entries in *Bard's Tale* and *Jinxter*.

On the Amiga, Melbourne House's newie *Road Wars* goes straight in at number one, displacing its stablemate *Xenon*. Watch the mighty blast of Domark's *Star Wars* use the force on the number one spot.

And next month's tips for the tops? Well, we reckon Amiga owners will be queueing up like kwazy to get their mitts on Palace's *Barbarian*. Adventure nuts may well fall for CRL's latest schlock-horror product, *Wolfman*. And if Firebird's *Io*, Elite's *Ikari Warriors* and Imagine's *Arkanoid: Revenge Of Doh* don't show up in next month's 64 charts, we'll eat our hats . . . well, maybe, if we can find 'em, that is . . .





Ooh look Mr Pacman! A fairy!

PACLAND

Quicksilva
64/128
Price: £9.95

To say that Namco's *Pac-man* was a rather successful arcade game, would be like saying the Pope is a rather good priest. Yes, four years after it first appeared this is the conversion of one of *Pac-man's* many spin offs. The game is set in Pac-man's homeland which as you full well know is named (justifiably if not inventively) Pacland. Anyway, for some odd reason Paccy (as we shall now refer to him) has to go right through it, which is not too easy as some of Pacland's natives are not half as friendly as the Pac we know and love.

The game is set out into trips. There are four levels to each trip, and each time Pac completes a level he is awarded a bonus, which differs depending upon how quickly the level is completed. The game scrolls horizontally and you as Pac-man must dodge all the nasties by walking, running, and jumping. The nasties look like the ghosts in the original Pac-man except they are far more advanced, they don't just chase you recklessly on foot . . . oh-no these sods are clever. They run you over in cars, drop things from windows, pound after you on pogo sticks and even planes to get you. And this is only the first few trips, I dread to think what's coming at the end.

As you get further on into the game the ghosts start to realise that they're going to have to do more than simply chase you, so this is where they begin to set traps. Yes, devious is the operative word here. Using your utmost skill, dexterity, and agility (not to mention quite a substantial amount of luck!!) you have to guide Pac through such perils as row upon row of mammoth swimming pools, for we all know Pac cannot swim and will have to propel himself with enough force off the diving board on each.

There are also great chasms in the ground with only rapidly moving logs as any form of bridge; trying to dodge ghosts while on these is not easy.

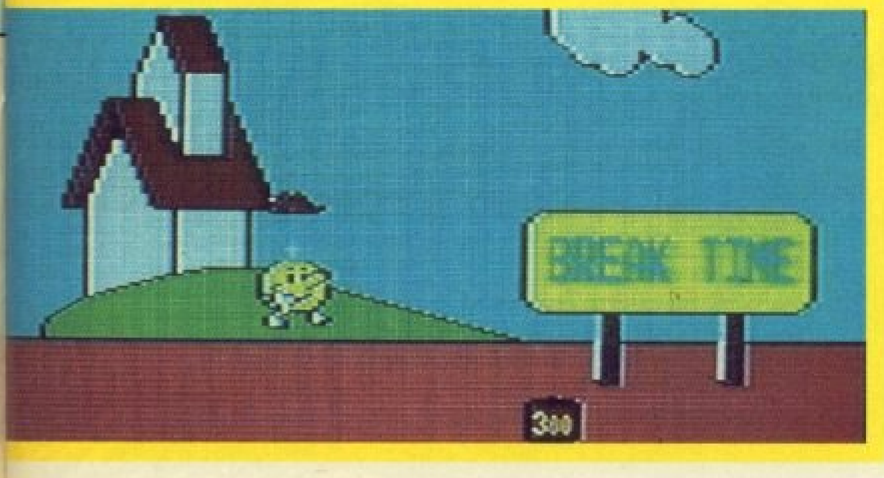
So far the adventure doesn't sound an awful lot of fun from Paccy's point of view, but if you remember right back to the original game there were these little round yellow pills he could eat that would have the sort of effect spinach has on Popeye. Well, they are back again, a little larger, but they do the job just as well. Eat one and you can munch the ghosts, and earn a bonus for around ten seconds.

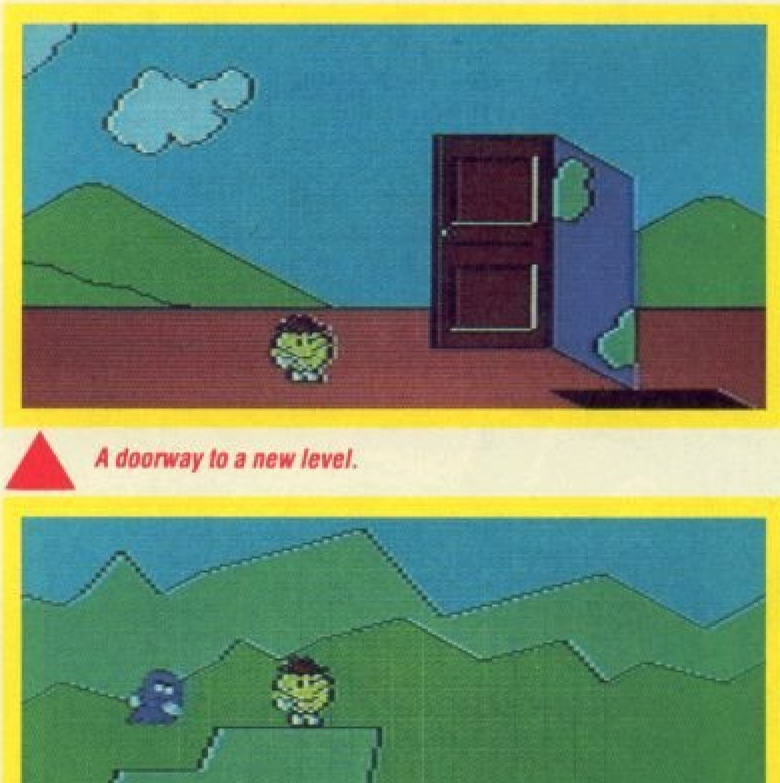
Pac-man can also earn himself little bonuses such as invincibility hats, and magic flying boots around the game.

For once I have found an Argus game which is on the right side of average. In fact it's really very good. True, it's not their own but they have done a faithful reproduction of an old but gold arcade game, reproducing the large colourful graphics and the jolly if a little frustrating tune to a tee. Yes, I really must advise you to give this one serious consideration.

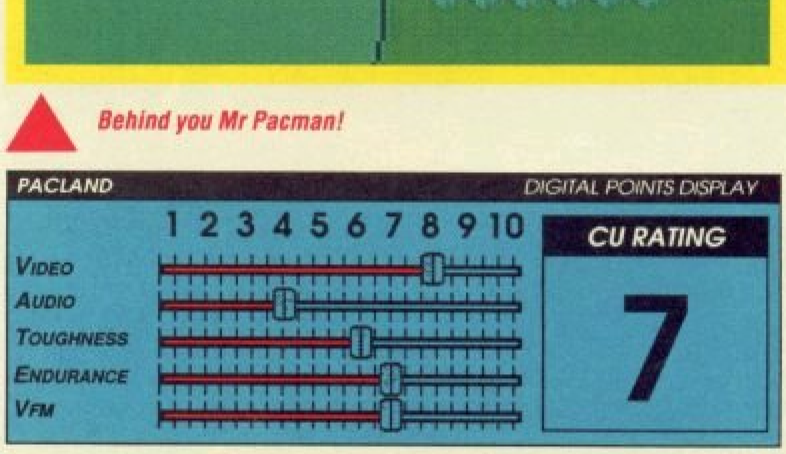
Ferdy Hamilton

Completing a level.





A doorway to a new level.



Behind you Mr Pacman!

PACLAND	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY
Video	8
Audio	4
Toughness	6
Endurance	7
VFM	7
CU RATING	**7**

ROLLING THUNDER

64/128
US Gold
Price:
£9.99/cass
£11.99/disk

The sight of *Shinobi* in the arcades may have been enough to remind gamers of its predecessor *Rolling Thunder* which has just made its appearance in the home market.

By now you will have glanced at the screenshots and seen the ratings, so you don't need me to tell you that *Rolling Thunder* is not the most impressive game ever released. In fact it rates as one of the worst. But, me being me, I'm going to tell you all about it . . .



Not so hot.

Converted from the Namco coin-op, *Rolling Thunder* is a sort of *Kung-Fu Master* with guns. As you walk through the levels, leaping from the platforms and shooting enemy agents, the screen scrolls. Doorways adorn the scenery and entering one beside a bullet or machine gun symbol tops up your supply of ammunition.

The scenario, for what it's worth, casts you as Rolling Thunder agent Albatross, on a mission to rescue agent Leila from the clutches of the Geldra organisation controlled by a megalomaniac called Maboo. Ten scrolling levels inhabited by Maboo's cronies stand between you and a confrontation with Maboo. Can you put an end to Geldra and its atrocities before it's too late? There again, do you want to . . .

The worst thing about *Rolling Thunder* is that it somehow slipped through US Gold's quality control system. Crude graphics and sound I can excuse, but surely this conversion could have been considerably better as far as playability is concerned. Not only is *Rolling Thunder* uninteresting to play, it's ludicrously lethargic and Mr Albatross isn't as flighty as his name suggests. The simple act of jumping requires precision timing, and you can't duck just after firing, which results in no end of frustration. And to make matters worse, you have to start from the beginning of a level when you die.

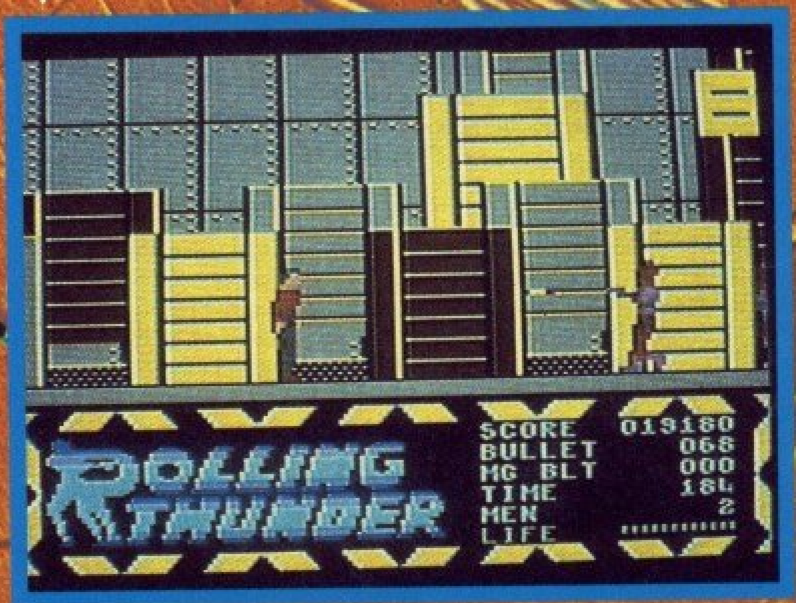
The backdrops are bland and repetitive, consisting of little more than simple platforms and blocks, and the sprites are chunkier than Pedigree Chum — and just as well animated. Sound is sparse (fortunately) with a few feeble bangs to accompany the gunfire and a chronic tune when the game ends. Actually, there is one good thing about *Rolling Thunder*, and that's the silly dance performed by Maboo's men before play begins. At least it's funny — which is more than can be said for the game as a whole. I sincerely hope US Gold give us more *720°*s and *Gauntlet II*s in the near future, as opposed to this kind of thing.

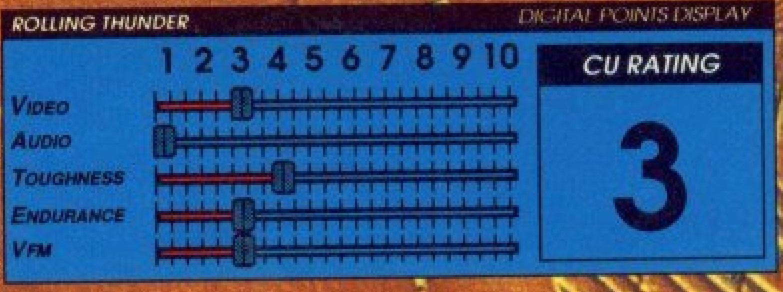
Gary Penn

Rolling Thunder . . . ? More of a negligible atmosphere disturbance.



"Bang Bang Pop Pop, you're dead I'm not . . ."






SAMURAI WARRIOR
THE BATTLE OF.... USAGI YOJIMBO
I AM USAGI YOJIMBO, RONIN SAMURAI AND BODYGUARD. GUIDE ME THROUGH THE DANGEROUS LANDS OF FEUDAL JAPAN AS I SEEK REVENGE ON THAT TREACHEROUS SCUM HIKIJI. AN EXTRA PAIR OF HANDS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN BATTLE, SO STAY ALERT HONOURABLE FRIEND, ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN NEXT THE ENEMY WILL STRIKE.
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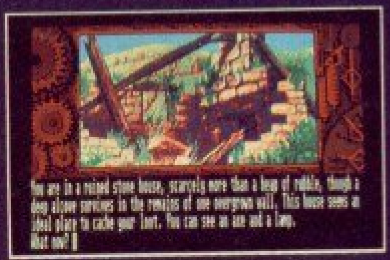
Time and magik

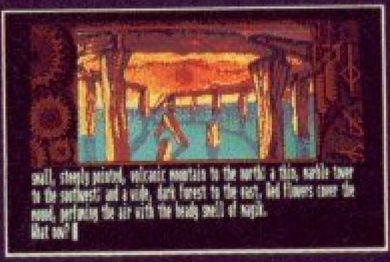
The trilogy



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Screen shots from Atari ST version

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64/128
Gremlin
Price: £9.99 cass
£14.99/disk

BLOOD VALLEY



Choose your earthly form . . .

You have somehow found yourself in the evil Valley of Gad which is ruled over by a particularly nasty reptillian specimen called Archveult, aided by three allies: Kritos Bloodheart, Ka-Rim and The Demiveult.

It seems that there's an annual contest in which a slave (that's you) gets to be the human quarry. You must make your way through the fourteen or so locations of the valley, fighting off all the nasties that are thrown at you, with the aid of the usual set of spells and things. Most of the locations are outdoor but there are a few actual places, like Gap Town, Wixard's Tower and the Monastery.

The storyline may sound pretty naff, but what makes *Blood Valley* a cut above the rest is the fact that it's a one or two player game, with enough contrast between the two to make it all worthwhile.

In one-player mode, you, as the quarry, get to play one of three characters: Priest, Barbarian or Thief, and are set tasks to complete as you fight your way round the Valley. The Priest's only got to defeat Archweult, destroy Malefice the Prince of Vampires, destroy the Undead Warrior Lord Tobias and slay the Demiveult. The Thief also has to steal a few items.

Whichever character you choose, you spend most of your time fighting off cohorts of funny blokes, some of whom drop food and treasure when you nobble them. Not being stupid, you pick them up. There are also bags of gold and spells to be had. Spells can be activated at any time, and you can also call up a directory listing all the items you've picked up.

You have to travel through a whole scene before being allowed to go to the next location. When you reach the required transfer spot, you have a choice of directions in which to go. Scrutinising the map supplied with the game should help you decide which direction to take.

Not surprisingly two-player mode is much more fun because one of you plays the hunter, and the other the hunted. At the beginning the hunter gets the opportunity to deploy his three allies at whatever map locations he thinks you'll visit on your travels. But you can't place them just anywhere, the instructions tell you which locations each character is restricted to.

When you get back, you can choose, as in the one-player game, which of the three victims to be. The same set of tasks still apply for each victim.

In two-player mode, the screen is split horizontally, with both players continuously nobbling nasties. Whenever the hunted enters a location in which you've placed an ally, you take telephatic control of the ally to do battle with the hunted in the upper screen. If you get nobbled, it's back down to the lower screen and the usual reptillian form. By the way, you have just five days to slay your quarry.

Gremlin have put some nice touches into this game but the whole thing, to my mind, is let down by the inadequate joystick controls for fighting. Since fighting is what you do most of the time, Gremlin might have put in a few more moves. All you seem to get is lunge and stab.

The graphics are generally good, but they're a little bit too intricate to be clear, especially on the 64.

Bearing in mind that there are not many two-player games around, this one makes a pretty good stab at fitting the bill. And the game is pretty big, definitely in the midnight oil league. One annoying point is that if either of the two characters gets nobbled, the game is over. So you'd better choose your friends carefully.

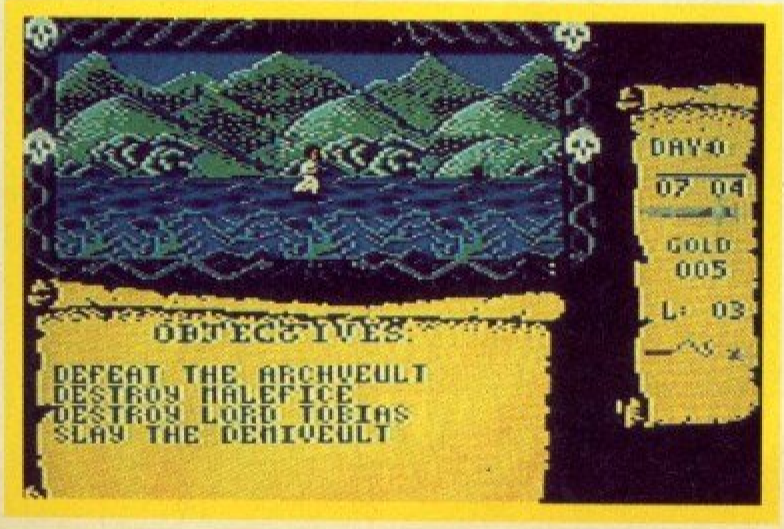
Bohdan Buciak

BLOOD VALLEY — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

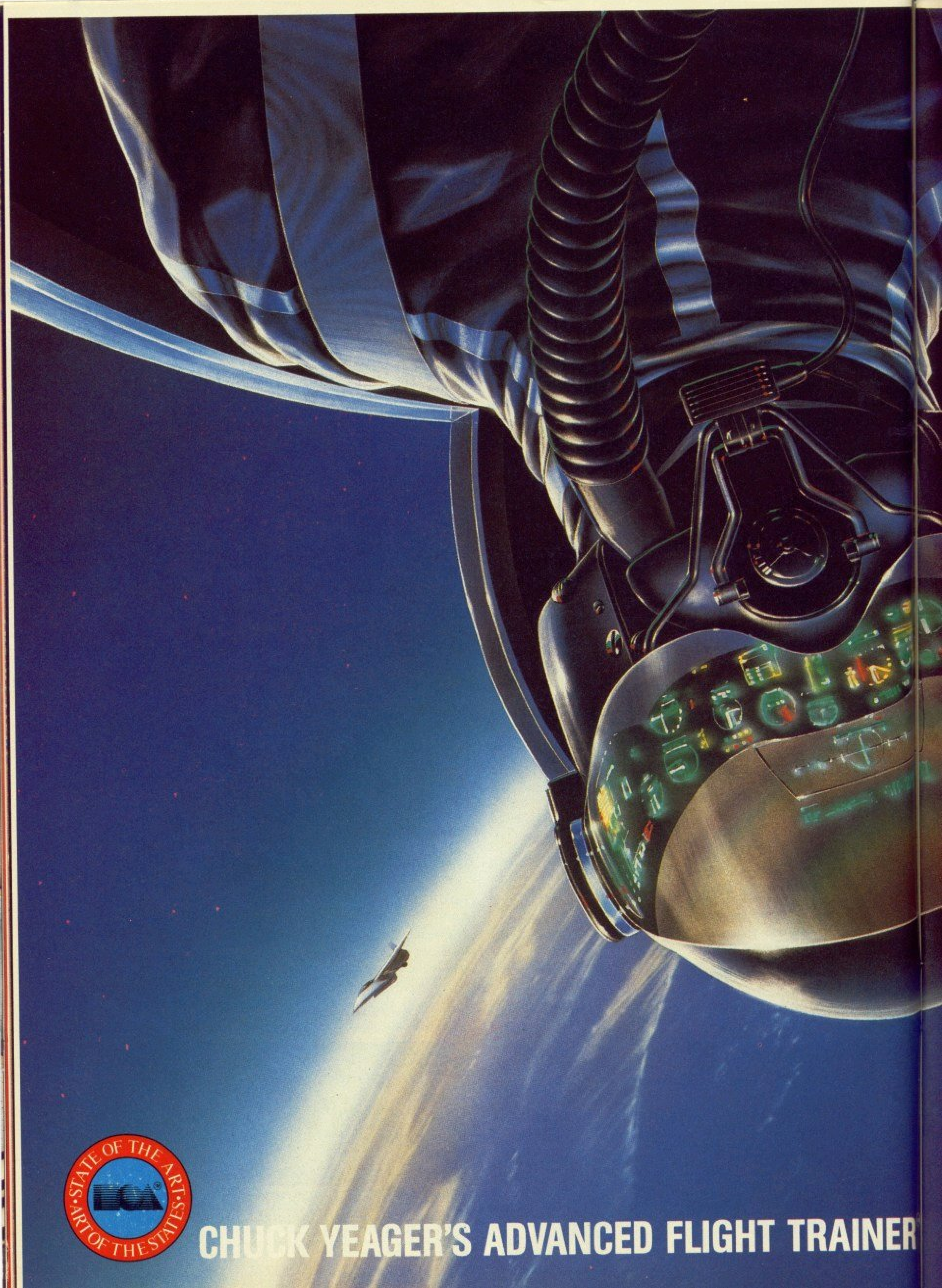
CU RATING **7**

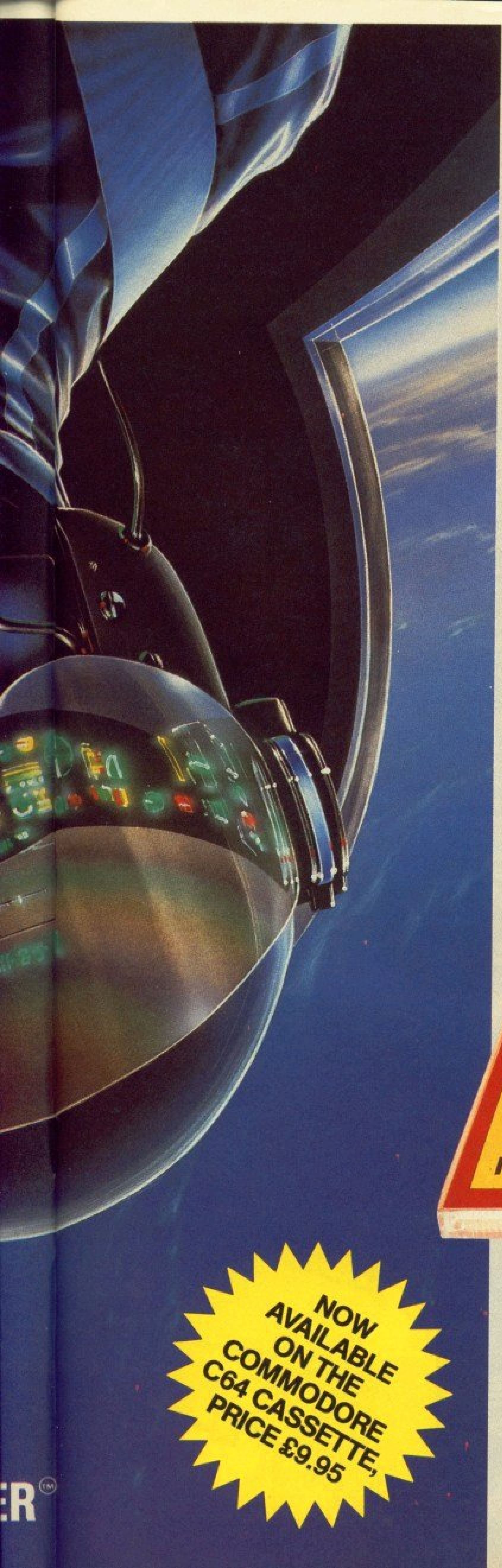


. . . Wander through that valley . . .



. . . And diss those slimeys.


STATE OF THE ART · ART OF THE STATES
ECA
CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

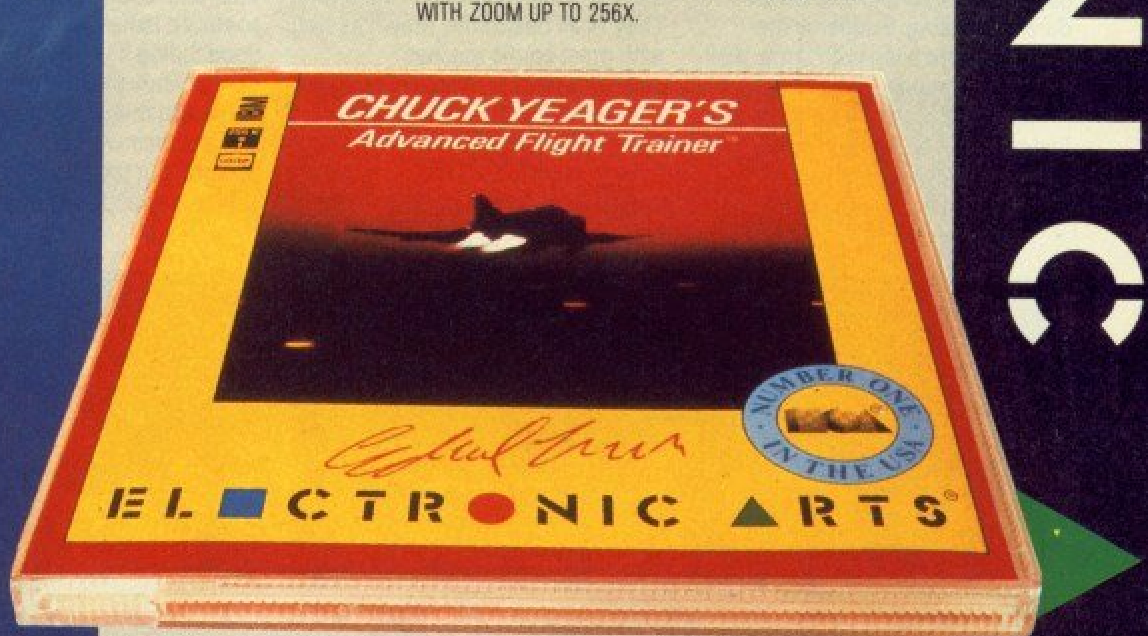


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TARGET RENEGADE

C.U. Screen Star

64/128
Imagine
Price:
£8.95/cass,
£12.95/disk

If you're a cynic you're going to have a hard time with this game. I mean there's two reasons for doing a sequel, right? Milk the licence and make loadsmoremoney. Think again. The good thing about a licence is that it carries a number of associations, but you can't just go using it whenever you like. Ocean went to Taito with an idea for a bona fide sequel and sold them it. And a good idea it is too. Take *Renegade* and put him into a new game with *Double Dragon* – style gameplay.

In truth though, last year's *Renegade* wasn't all it might have been, which is why Ocean put Dave Collier on the job. The result, as you might expect from the man responsible for many of their best games like *Arkanoid* and *Green Beret*, is striking. Suddenly the backdrops are filled with large, well-animated characters.

The plot is much the same as the first round of bruising, with the Renegade now in pursuit of a gangland boss, a Mr Big who murdered his brother whilst he was investigating his activities. Your revenge trail takes you through five different locations populated by the kind of people Bronson's Paul Kersey wouldn't spit on.

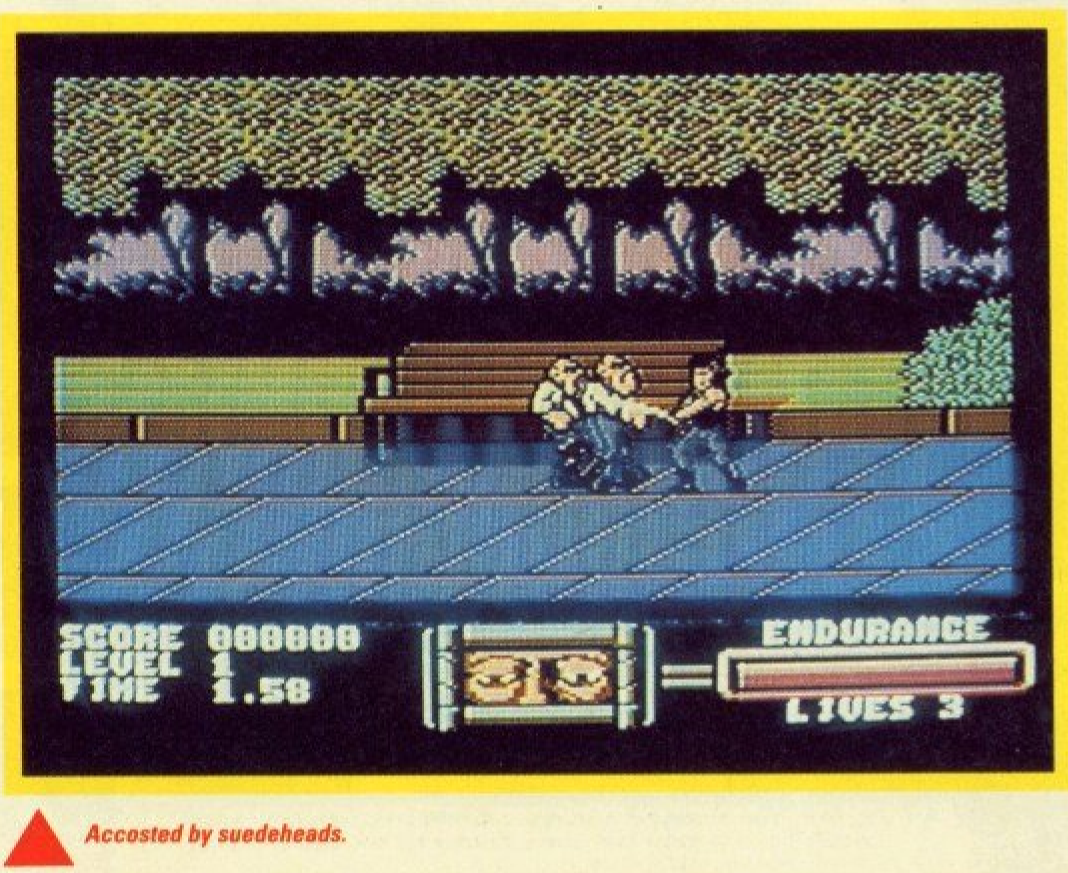
You begin on the third floor of a deserted multi-story car-park. No sooner do you emerge from the lift than a bunch of rampaging Hell's Angels set on you. One tries to run you down on his bike immediately so you better be ready to kick the oily scumbag off it. To get out of the car park you have to work your way through its four levels, going down in the lift and fighting your way out until you finally emerge on the street in Level Two.

Attackers come at you in pairs or singly, basically because they're so big. Each man is four sprites large and there are weapons in there too. They're all beautifully drawn as well, with great comic touches reminiscent of arcade games styling. The bottom of the screen shows your strength and a large pair of eyes react to the kind of treatment you receive. A good thump in the gonads turns them bloodshot. And no wonder.

Our vigilante has all the moves he had in his first adventure, but this time you don't have to access them with the space bar (it's nice to know companies do listen to us occasionally.) But Renegade also has the ability to pick up and use fallen weapons *Double Dragon*-style. You have to disarm an assailant before you get to dish out the treatment yourself but when you have a weapon like the bat or the stick it replaces the punch so you can start wrapping it round a few faces.

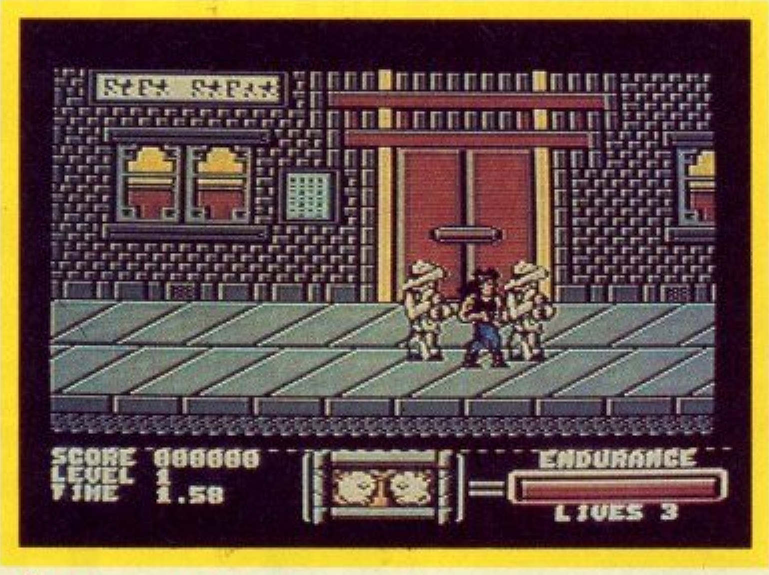
Level Two is the sleazy street, populated by pimps (what the packaging euphemistically refers to as a lady's boss). If you sort them out you can make your way along a superb backdrop of shops, all with authentic shading on their windows. Your path soon gets blocked by some, er, ladies, who give you a good hiding if you do the gentlemanly thing.

The last thing anyone wants to do is make their way through the park at night, but the Renegade has no choice, so keep your eyes peeled

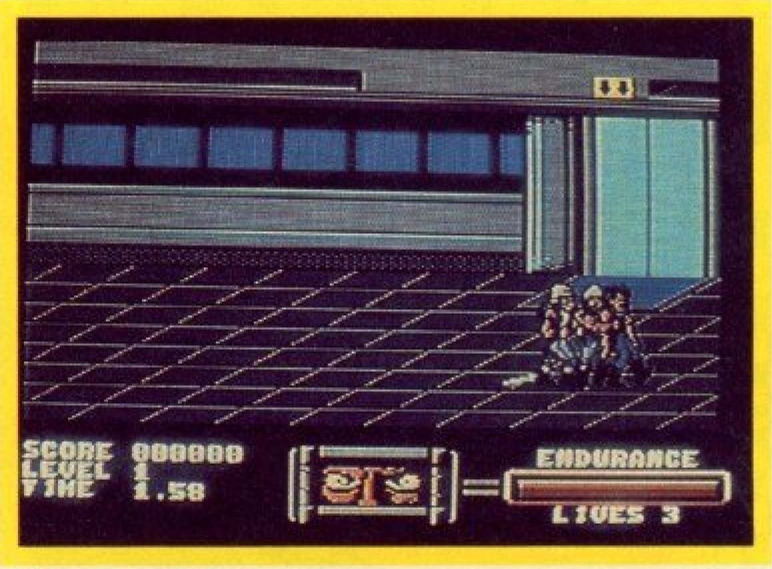


Accosted by suedeheads.





Surrounded by "ladys' bosses".

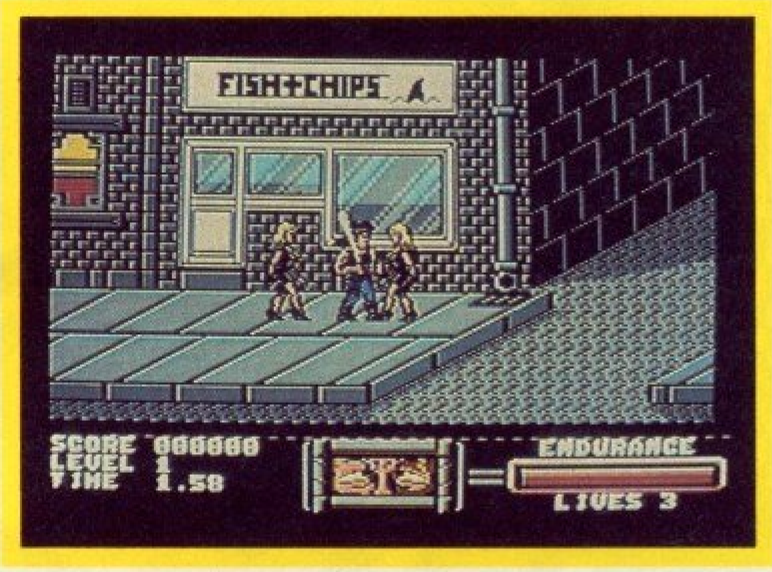


You can't park here, matey.

and your bat handy for thuggin' great skinheads. If you don't wake up in a crowd you may make it to the shopping mall where some objectionable Beastie Boy types will slide on backwards and set their dog on you. The dog is quite wonderful. He opens his jaw like a crocodile and takes big chunks out of you.

The final level takes you to the confrontation with Mr Big in his spit and sawdust club. To reach him you'll have to get round his fat'n'mean bouncers. Then you can sort out your differences. Oh, by the way, he's huge. Like eleven sprites huge, and it takes more than a couple of taps with your toothpick of a baseball to stop him.

Target Renegade is hugely entertaining and ample justification for a sequel — much more so than *Arkanoid – Revenge of Doh.* It develops the theme, and improves the gameplay no end on the original.



Slapped around outside the chippie.





Target Renegade: *another smash hit.*

The graphics alone kick *Renegade* square in the kidneys. This version is great to look at and just as good to play. Dave Collier has done the business once again — just get him working on something else because gamers are still hungry for software this good.

Mike Pattenden

TARGET RENEGADE — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

8

WIN A YAMAHA KEYBOARD!

C COMPETITION U





How would you like to get your hands on an organ (fner, fner)? What's a keyboard got to do with *Renegade*? Well, in his spare time ol' Ren is keyboardist in a streetwise combo well 'Ard. Actually we made that bit up, but it's no more unlikely than most of the stuff we read on the back of cassette cases. (*Who wrote this stuff? Ed.*)

Either way it's a great opportunity for you to become the next synth king. Just find a mate, press the buttons, tickle the ivories and you could be the next Pet Shop Boys, or Swing Out Sister.

With a Yamaha Portatone PSR-12 electronic keyboard you get 32 orchestral sounds including strings, brass, piano and guitar, etc, plus 16 built in rhythm tracks and fill-in options. Other features include sustain and auto bass chord accompaniment. That's a stunning package.

Don't worry if you don't win first prize because there's 25 runners-up as well. The next five out of the CU Random PrizeWinner LuckySod SelectoComputer win copies of Bomb the Bass' huge Beat Dis hit and copies of *Target Renegade*. Another 20 win copies of the game alone.

So how do you win? We want you to answer the four music related questions that follow and then tell us what piece of music you would most like to hear on the front of an all action shoot 'em up as a tiebreaker. Answers on a postcard to reach us at Keyboard Compo, Commodore User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by April 18.

1. Which well-known Geordie music programmer has quit Britain for the States?
2. What film soundtrack did the loading music to Combat School resemble?
3. Which company does Jean Michel Jarre write sountracks for?
4. What is the name of the DJ involved in Bomb the Bass?


IO
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A LEGEND IN GAMES SOFTWARE

CARD SHARKS

64/128
Electronic Arts
Price: £9.95/cass £14.95/disk



Wot a choice, eh?

There are two forms of disreputable entertainment that just don't work on home computers — fruit machines and cards. The thing that links the two, as many reviewers in the past have incredibly astutely pointed out, is that they're both reliant on winning large sums of money. The one add-on these inventive sprocket chaps have yet to devise is a little chute that slots on to the front of your machine which chucks out cash whenever you win something.

This leaves games like *Fruit Machine Simulator* and *Card Sharks* with a problem: how do you retain some interest? *FMS* failed to answer on some other form of reward like a curvacious slapper stripping off. Electronic Arts, not being a grubby mac kind of company have come up with another tack. They sit you in front of a group of characters which you actively loath for one reason or another.

Once you've decided what game you're going to play (options include poker, hearts or chase the lady and pontoon) you can select who you're going to play against. Characters include Maggie Thatch, Ronnie Reagan, Mickey Gorbachov and a couple of other no marks called Luigi, Milton and Lady. The one thing they all have in common is that they're crude, silly stereotypes. Maggie is frightfully English and stuck up, which she is, but this really doesn't help. Gorby says things like "Russia demands three", when he wants to change cards whilst Milton is an incredibly laid back nurk with a passing resemblance to Woody Allen. He makes inane commants along the lines of "Like wow" and "gosh!" They are all without exception insufferable when they win.

The action itself is confined to the table where the cards are dealt and the games won or lost. The characters all look like who they're supposed to look like but the animation is decidedly dodgy when they pick their cards up. A bizarre elasticated arm snakes out and snaps back into place.

As for the games, they all play fairly straightforwardly, but naturally they all become fairly boring after a while. Another problem is that when you play poker the cards are dealt randomly. Now any fule kno that you don't shuffle in poker and that's the way you get some decent hands building up. Not in *Card Sharks* — most games are won with a pair or two pairs. Not very exciting.

Despite its attempts to be different *Card Sharks* falls into the same trap as the rest of the gambling games. After a short while it becomes relentlessly dull. With a price tag like *Card Sharks* carries I'm most definitely out.

Mike Pattenden

Card Sharks — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	Rating (1–10)
Video	6
Audio	3
Toughness	1
Endurance	3
VFM	3

CU RATING: 4

Ronnie gets gung ho.





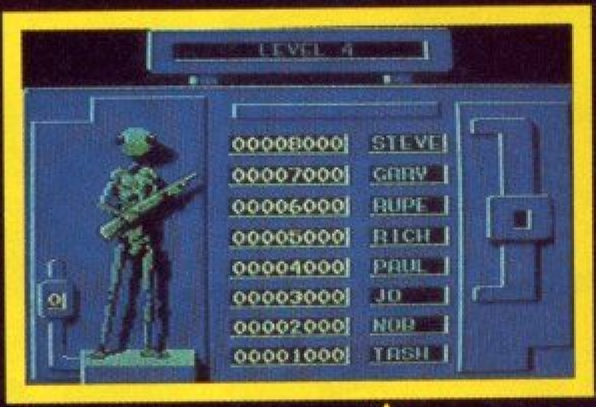
A challenge from Gorb.

Oh no, Dino's dead . . .





. . . and you're not feeling much better.



Hi-score table.

On the very edge of known space far from the star systems of man, dwells a race of highly intelligent, highly developed insectoids. The insectoids are a peaceful race who spend most of their time colonising barren long dead planets despite being under constant attack from the hostile Arachnoids.

To protect their colonies from attack, a large shield bubble is in operation around the cities. This shield prevents any large metallic objects such as Arachnoid stormtroopers getting through, but they require huge amounts of power. To keep the shields at full strength there are several generators around the surface of the colony that need regular recharging.

To meet the need to recharge the shield generators an elite group fo insectoids was formed. Mounted on reptillian mounts called runners they had to patrol the perimeter of the colonies recharging any flat shield generators they come across. Destroying any Arachoid probes or hostile lifeforms which mav have penetrated the shield.

Your runner is not impervious to damage and tends to lay down and die after a short period of time. So when one of your runners expires you have to call up one of the four spares that each colony holds. You do this automatically by whistling. The sound effect for this is really great and a whole lot better than the way I whistle.

At the top of the screen is a scanner which shows the location of the generators around the colony. If a generator is shown to be a steady green then everything is fine. If a generator is flashing green then it is close to failing, if it is flashing red then its batteries are flat and you had better get there to recharge it.

It's big. There's a great atmosphere as you bound around the colony blastin' at all and sundry. The landscape is brilliant, the parallax scrolling is excellent and the colour and design is lovely.

The sound comprises of the usual blast 'em up noises, sometimes drowning out the steady thump thump of the runners feet. When you are just getting up after being knocked off your runner, your little insect gets up and scratches his head, a little sequence which provides a great little sound effect.

Rimrunner is not an original game idea, but it does have lots of original touches. On the high score table you get a large version of your insectoid armed with a shotgun. When you select a letter he blasts it, then works the slide to chamber the next round.

I enjoyed *Rimrunner*, a nice piece of gratuitous violence never goes amiss with me. My only gripe is that there is not enough room for error. You have a set time limit within which you have to recharge all the generators, and unless your careful you're not going to have enough time. There is a redeeming feature though you do get the chance to play the level again and again until you either run out of energy or you run out of runners.

Mark Patterson



64/128
Palace

Price: £9.95/tape £14.95/disk

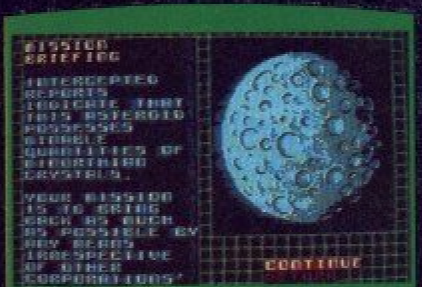

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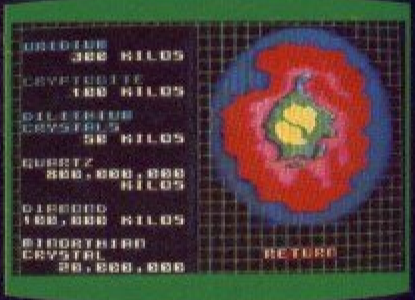


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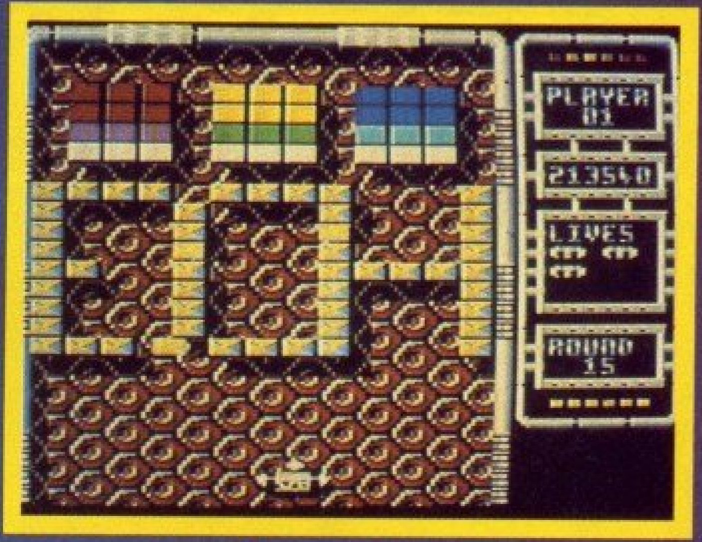
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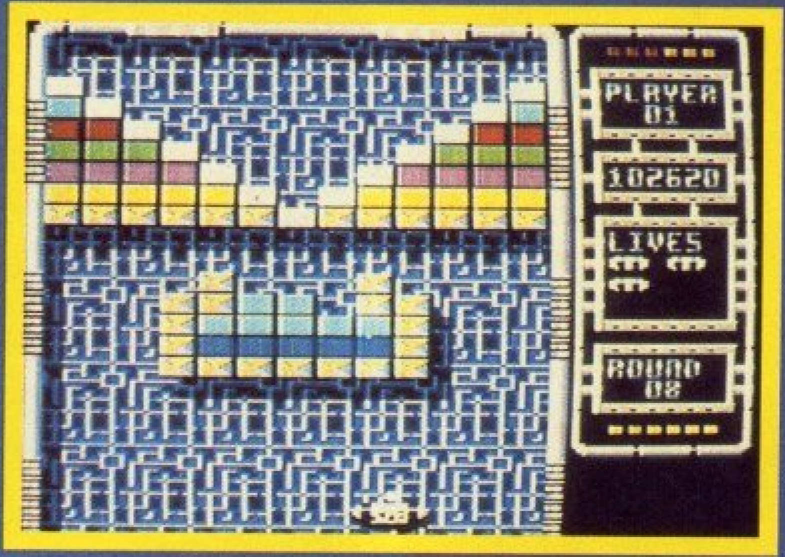
Commodore programming by Daryl Bowers. Spectrum and Amstrad programming by Simon Freeman. Graphics by Focus.

ARKANOID
REVENGE OF DOH

64/128
Imagine

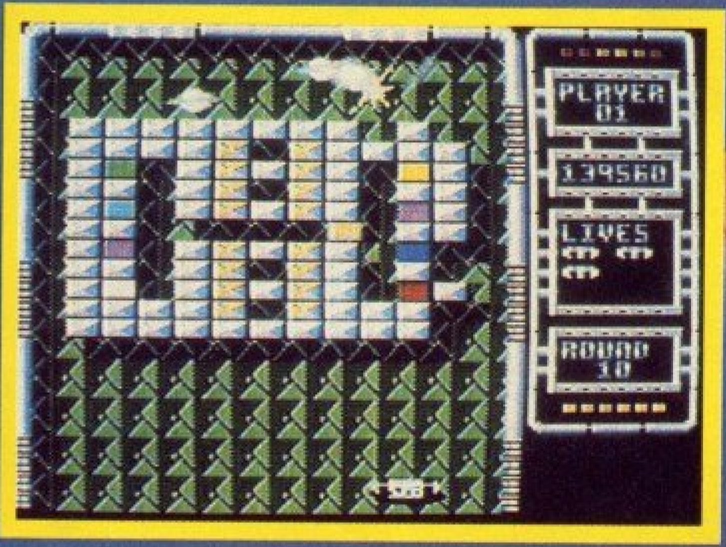


If you think this one's hard . . .



. . . wait till you see this one.

Price:
£8.95/cass
£12.95/disk



I've had it up to here (*lifts hand to eyebrows*) with these 'contemporary' *BreakOut* variants. For a start there are too many of them. Why software companies can't come up with something mind-blowingly original once in a while, I don't know. But that's not what irritates me. No, what I find really annoying about these dressed-up versions of a concept almost a decade old is the fact that they're so bloody playable, regardless of their quality.

Arkanoid: Revenge of Doh is the latest addition — and rather neat it is too. Based on the Taito coin-op of the same name, this psuedo sequel to *Arkanoid* (I'm assured by Ocean's Gary Bracey that this isn't *Arkanoid II* — that's yet to come) has you battling through 33 more screens of bricks and aliens. Actually, there's a bit more to it than before. This time there are 66 screens to play (although you only get to play 33 in one go), plus a couple of new aliens and some rip-snorting new features.

But first, the scenario . . . Doh's back and he wants revenge. It's up to you to stop him . . . erm that's it.

All the old favourites are here, such as bat expand, catch, slow ball, disrupters and everyone's favourite, the lasers (thankfully they appear more frequently in this version than they did in Imagine's conversion of its predecessor). But there's more: . . . bat reduction capsules — catch one and the Vaus 2 (that's the bat) shrinks faster than a certain part of the male anatomy in very cold water. You can pick up an extra bat and play with two at once (coo) or a ghost bat — basically a second, shimmery bat that follows your bat as you move. Catching a capsule marked with an 'H' splits the ball into three — and keeps splitting the balls whenever you lose one or two of them. The 'D' capsule has a more dramatic effect than before though. This time it splits the ball into at least a dozen pieces.

Then there's the 'M' capsule which turns any balls on-screen into armour-piercing red balls which rip through everything in their path. And last but not least we have the fireball — seldom seen, but very effective when caught as it does some pretty strange things . . . like split the ball into 32 pieces!

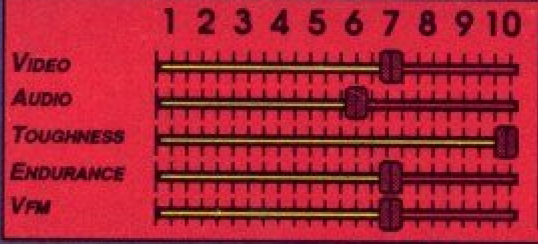
Other noticeable differences between this version and its predecessor are that more than one capsule falls at once — very useful. Also, there are two new brick types to contend with: moving bricks and bricks which reappear a couple of seconds after they've been destroyed. Both provide their fair share of problems, as does the alien on level 18, who can only be destroyed with multiple hits — and there are no capsules to help you!

Now all this would be well and good, what with the gear new features and the like, if *Arkanoid: Revenge Of Doh* was as slick and playable as *Arkanoid*. But sadly, it's not quite as much fun the second time around. For some bizarre reason the ball occasionally passes through the bat, despite making a noise to indicate that you've actually hit the ball. Marginally more annoying is the fact that the ball changes speed and direction rather unsubtly and unpredictably. But the biggest disappointment for me is that some of the screens are ludicrously unplayable and extremely tedious. There's a very fine line between screens requiring skill to clear them and screens totally dependant on luck, and the designers of some of these screens didn't tread the line very carefully. Fortunately, you can choose which screens you wish to play by moving either left or right when you clear a screen of bricks. Thus you can play screen four to the right followed by screen five to the left if you don't like screen five to the right. Get the idea?

Still, there's plenty of good, clean fun to be had here — if you haven't yet tired of the genre.

Gary Penn

ARKANOID: REVENGE OF DOH — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY



CU RATING

7

F | SPACE . . .
F | TIME . . .

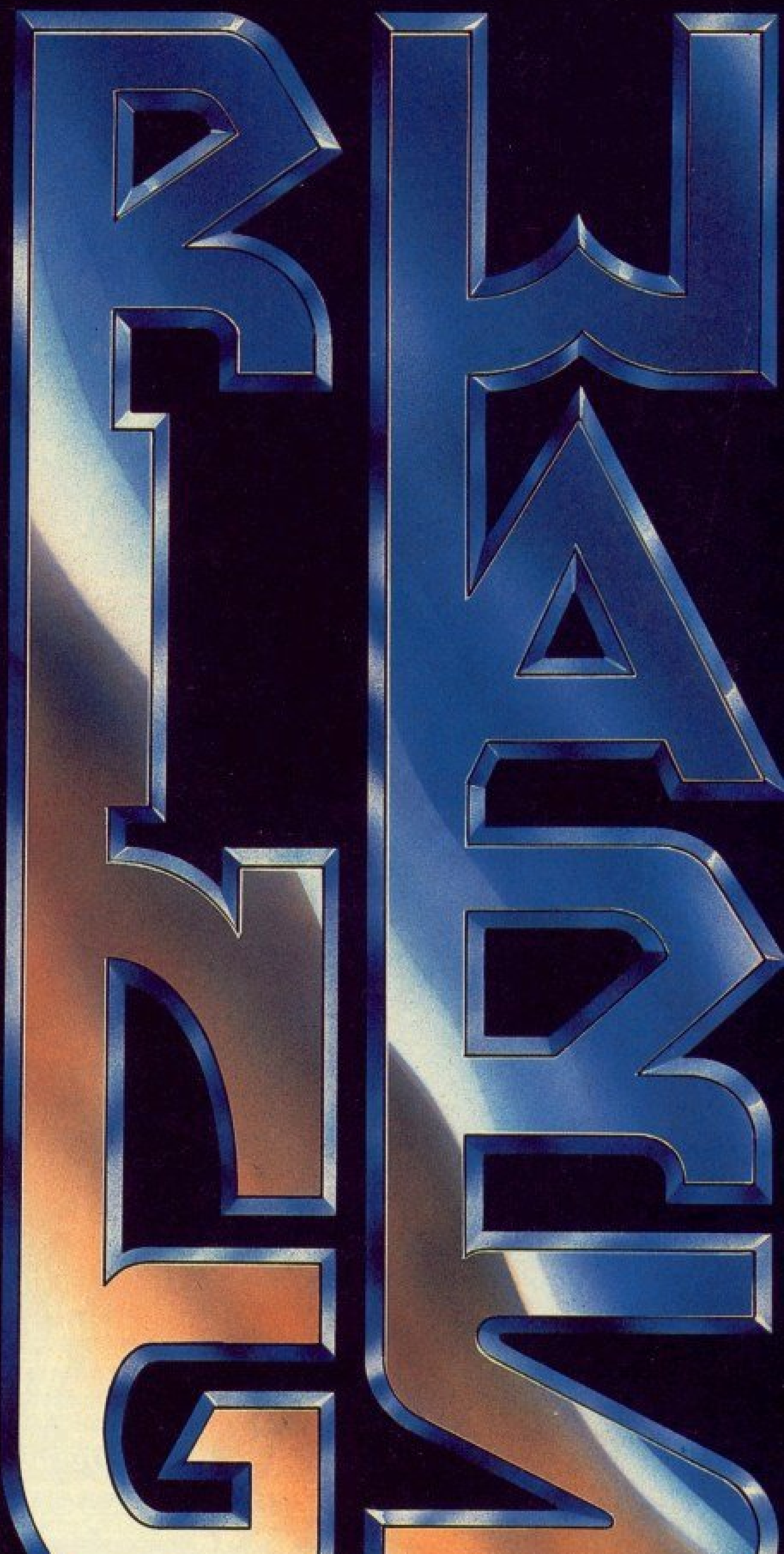
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TROLL

64/128
Outlaw
Price
£9.99 cass
£12.99 disk

Following fast on the heels of Outlaw's first release — *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit* (that's *SEUCK* to you), comes *Troll*, what you might call the company's first attempt at a 'real' game.

Humgruffin, we are told, is a large and amiable troll who has stumbled into the netherworld of Narc, an eldritch land of crystal caverns populated by not so amiable goblins. Judging from the poster that comes with the game Humgruffin is not what you'd call a picture of beauty, but what he lacks in good looks he makes up for in intelligence. Being a smart cookie, he realises his only chance of escape is to reverse the spell that got him into this mess. And to do that he must collect the key crystal from each chamber and place it in its amulet.

The chambers are made up of hexagonal, square, round, and variously-shaped sections placed together to form a honeycomb. This is the games biggest drawback. It might be *OK* if you have a monitor, or the latest FST wonderscreen TV, but on mine I could hardly make out enough detail to discover where I was, never mind where I was going. This can be pretty infuriating when you're trying to hop up and down the hexagons because often you can't get where you want to go and it's not obvious why. I found the best solution to this problem was to sit five inches from the screen.

Troll isn't one of those games where you can walk out of one screen and into another, which is why it's full of holes. Humgruffin has holes in his pockets — lots of them. By throwing one of these onto the ground in front of him, he can jump down it and escape into another cave. Holes have a multitude of uses. Humgruffin can throw one into the path of an encroaching goblin and wave bye bye as it disappears into oblivion. But Humgruffin is not the only one with a hole or two to throw around. Perilous death holes appear from nowhere and swallow up troll and goblin alike.

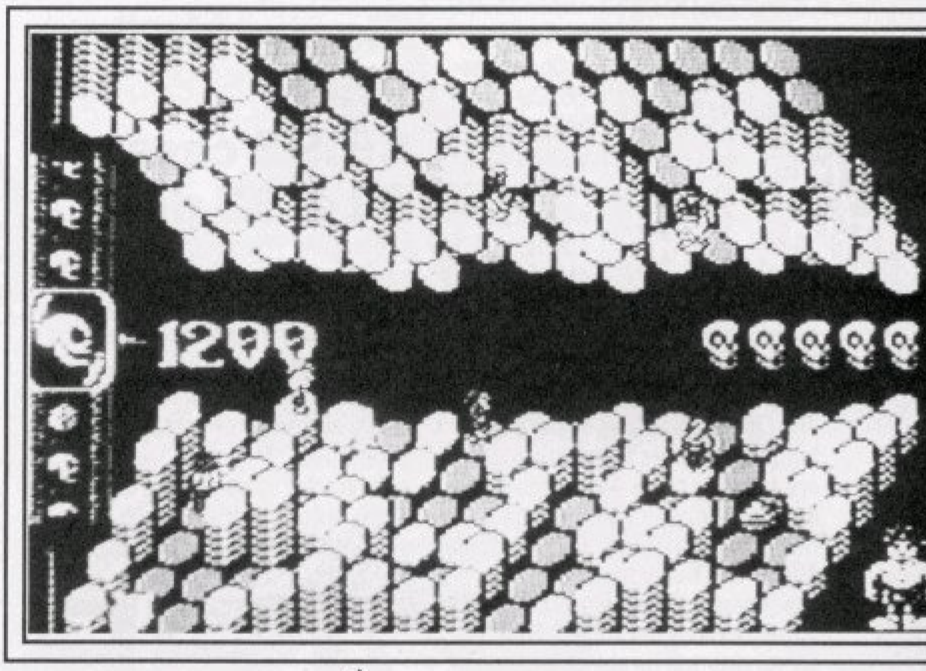
Apart from coming into contact with a goblin, which no one in their right mind would risk, there is only one other danger Humgruffin has to watch out for. When they're not chasing after you, or falling down the holes, the goblins spend their leisure time building walls. By placing tile upon tile they can make parts of the cave inaccessible, or even wall you in completely. If this happens the only way out is via a hole, assuming you've got somewhere to throw it, that is. Hole jumping seems to be a bit of a haphazard undertaking. Sometimes you end up in a different cave altogether, occasionally you end up somewhere else in the cave, so looking before you leap is out of the question.

There are other ways to get around though. Every now and then a mushroom sprouts out of the floor; if you can get there before it disappears you can bounce up and down on it. This spins the wheel of fortune and sends you (via another hole of course) into yet another cave. Here you will find the same thing as the last one, and your task is again to get the crystal and stick it in the amulet. As well as mushrooms, the odd bit of fruit appears every now and then and is well worth munching as it keeps your energy up.

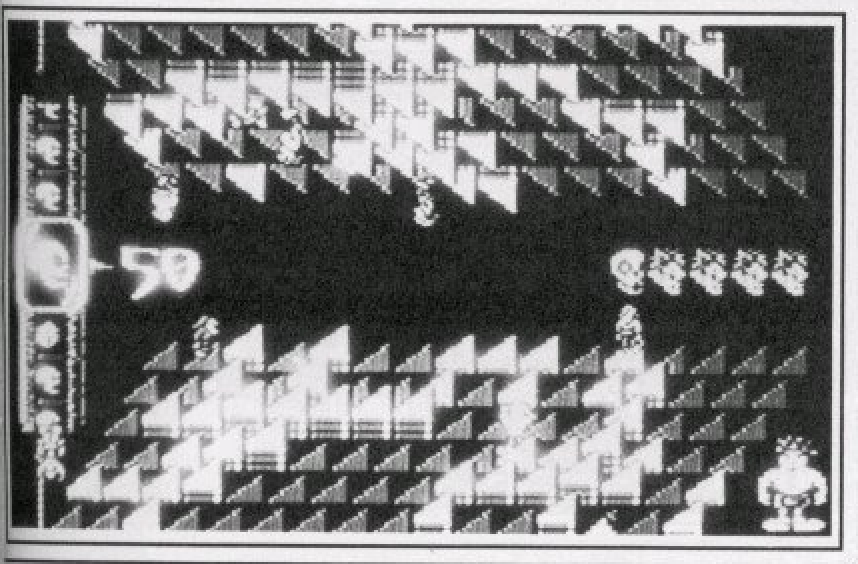
If you get bored walking around on the cave floor you can head for the 'flip pyramid' which somersaults you onto the ceiling. Getting about on the ceiling is tricky to say the least. The temptation is to stand on your head, though turning the TV upside down might be a more comfortable option.

I have to say I'm disappointed. After *SEUCK* I'm sure I wasn't the only one anticipating great things from Outlaw. *Troll* is OK, but that's about as far as it goes. Everything about it is average — graphics sound, gameplay — the lot. Maybe summer's here already.

Ken McMahon



▲ *Living on the ceiling*



▼ *Hop till you drop.*

TROLL — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

5

THE DESTINY KNIGHT
the bard's tale II

64/128
Electronic Arts
Price:
£9.95 cass/
£14.95 disk

The Bards Tale, was released by Ariolasoft in Christmas '86. CU called it "a classic fantasy role playing game with all the magic, mystery, combat and cunning a mere mortal can devise".

It may have been true in 1986, But Electronic Arts have been busy. *The Destiny Knight* is 50 per cent bigger with more monsters, more spells, more cities and dungeons, more of everything in fact, and a few new things as well. But although it's bigger and better than its predecessor, *The Destiny Knight* has almost exactly the same format, so *BT* experts will be able to get stuck in right away.

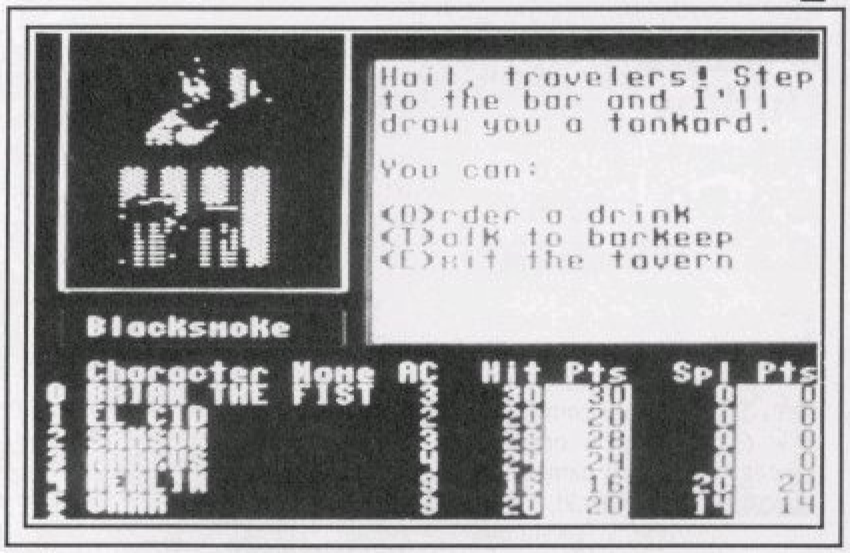
For those of you unfamiliar with the *Bards Tale*, let me fill you in on the story. The realm is under constant invasion from lawless bands of mercenaries from the neighbouring kingdom of Lestrade. The reason behind the breakdown in law and order is that Evil Archmage, Lagoth Zanta, has snapped up the Destiny wand and hidden its seven pieces.

Your band of inexperienced, but enthusiastic combatants must search the kingdom high and low to discover and reunite the seven pieces of wand. The game begins in The Adventurer's Guild – a coffee bar/sanctuary where adventurers can put their feet up without fear of attack. The first thing you must do is assemble a party. The easy option is to use the pre-built party on the character disc supplied. Really adventurous types can make up their own band of merry men.

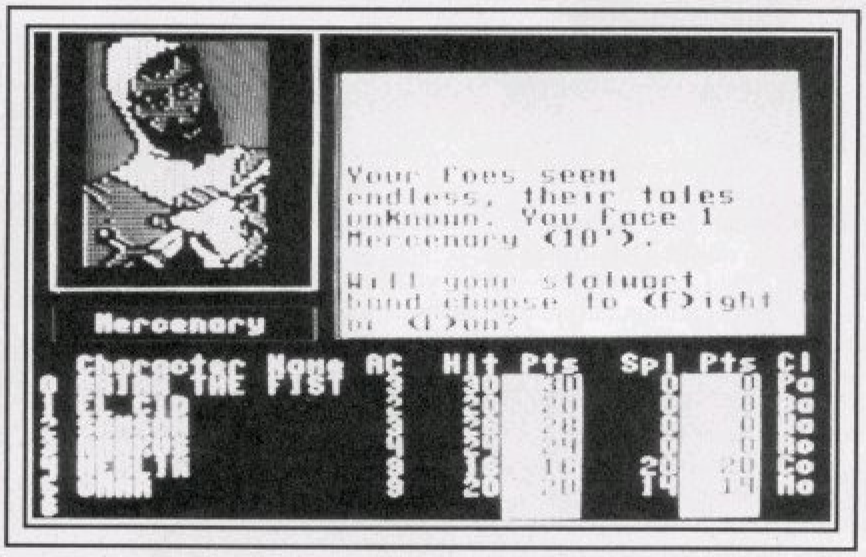
The characters are as mixed a bunch as you could for: humans, elves, dwarves, gnomes, hobbits and orcs, with a few half-breeds thrown in for good measure. It's a good idea to pick 'n mix, because different races have different characteristics. Gnomes are good at magic, Elves are nimble, humans are pig-headed. Similarly each member of your party will have a profession. Warriors, paladins and rogues make up your fighting force, monks, conjurers and magicians handle the sorcery. It's also a good idea to take along a Bard, whose songs will strengthen morale in battle and have other magical properties.

Character attributes are displayed at the bottom of the screen: strength, intelligence, constitution, luck and spell levels. Further info, experience, gold and level can be called up on individual character's screens. All of this text data is accompanied by vivid animated graphics depiciting each character in portrait form.

Now it's time to take to the streets of Tangramayne – the capital city. The impressive 3D scrolling screen gives you a forward view down the road with buildings on either side. A quick left or right turn will take you to the door. Travelling around and all other actions are carried out via the keyboard. There are various places worth visiting before making an assault on the dungeon, where you will be asked to rescue a princess. A visit to Garth's Equipment Shoppe will get your team well kitted out. The tavern is a good place for information as well as a drink. Roscoe's Energy Emporium provides energy point pick-me-ups and the casino is a good place to lose all your gold.



Order the drink, we'd say!



Are you a man or a mouse?

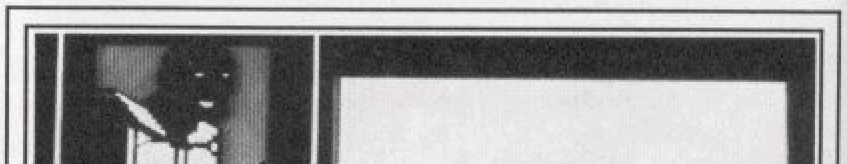
Of course before you enter any of these establishments you will need some spends. You can pick up some gold on the way by engaging some no-goods in battle. The protocol here is that once the agressor's intentions are obvious you have the option to stand and fight or, if you're lucky, run away.

Should you decide to stand your ground, decisions must be made as to what each member of the party is going to do. This is where any extra weapons you may have found might come in handy. You can get your conjurers, monks, etc to throw a few spells around. Arc Fire is lethal stuff in the hands of a conjurer. Some of the more subtle stuff includes Vorpal Plating, which causes someone's weapon to take on extra power (ooer), and the Quick Fix, which restores people to full energy from the brink of death.

As you progress through the game, your players will gain combat experience, much more powerful magic, and of course, lots of gold. There are six cities to visit in all, and plenty of wilderness in between where you can get lost.

The Destiny Knight will keep you occupied for the next eighteen months, who knows what EA will have come up with by then.

Ken McMahon



The Destiny Knight: role-playing at its best.

THE DESTINY KNIGHT — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

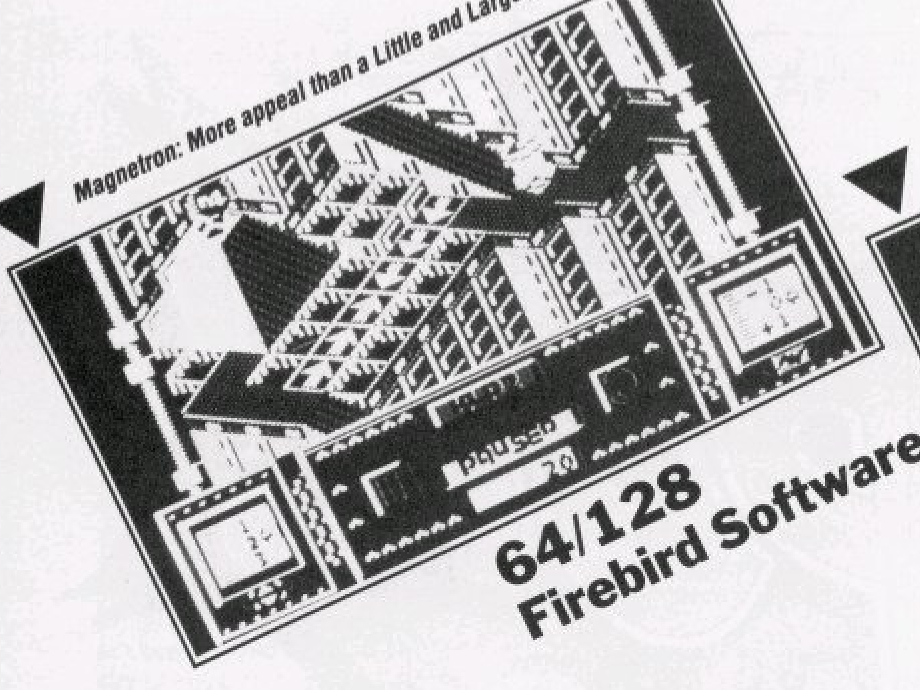
	1–10
Video	9
Audio	7
Toughness	9
Endurance	8
VFM	8

CU RATING

8


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Magnetron: More appeal than a Little and Large joke.



Plenty of Paradroid-esque fun to be had here . . .



64/128
Firebird Software

Price: £8.95/cass
£14.95/disk

MAGNETRON

For a *Marble Madness* clone, *Magnetron* gets about as far away as you can from the rolling along ramps formula as is possible. In fact, it's gone for a new improved formula. Not just substituting marble for droid and roll for hover, it's made two innovations: it won't let you fall off, and it's introduced grappling. This to me, is revolutionary thinking of the highest order.

Anyway, *Magnetron* is as good a game as I've seen this year no matter how much it owes to those who strove before.

The scenario goes something like this. You are in control of a droid, placed on one of eight satellite space stations. Each space station contains four reactors which you must turn off. Your mission is complete when all eight stations are powerless — so to speak. Only when you've turned off all the reactors on a station can you beam to the next one. You'll know when they're all off because all the lights go out. Clever, eh?

To add spice to this imaginatively lethergic storyline, all kinds of things have been introduced, notably grappling guard droids, and various interlude screens — more about those later.

You can simply zap guard droids with whatever weapon is allocated to you on that particular station. Or you can grapple with them. Why grapple if you can zap? Because successful grappling replenishes your energy, and even more successful grappling creates a clone of yourself (sometimes known as an extra life).

It works like this. When you grapple with a droid, the grapple screen appears which features one of those 3 by 3 puzzle squares. Since droids are set to self-destruct whenever they grapple, you must get three bombs (not lemons) on the bottom line of the puzzle to deactivate the droid's detonator, thereby giving yourself more energy. Get the middle and top rows right too, and you create a clone of the droid for your own use.

The only trouble with all this is the time limit, which is about as long as the laugh you get from a Little and Large joke. Needless to say, the droids get tougher as you move to higher stations. But one good point is that you don't seem to get zapped that easily. None of this 'back to the start' stuff here.

That's the grappling finished with. Now for turning off reactors. This works in a similar way, calling up the reactor screen whenever you hover above the appropriate spot. The reactor has four fuel rods which you must play about with until the low-pitched drone goes down and eventually fizzles out. You can also see when the reactor is off because the spark between the two terminals goes out. What you've done, according to the blurb, is removed a fuel rod which you then carry around with you ready for the next reactor.

But the fuel rod you're carrying affects your performance. The heavier it is (weight is indicated by the left-side meter) the slowler you go up a ramp. Its charge, both positive and negative (indicated by the right-side meter) also affects movement. Parts of the causeways have arrows on them and depending on which way you're charged, you're either pushed in the direction of the arrows or repelled.

Also dotted around are computer screens which you can access to give you droid information and the status of all the reactors on the station.

Only when all the reactors are off, can you go to one of the "beamer" squares to be transported to the next station. There are usually between two and three beamer squares per station and it's wise to make a map as you go to help you find your way back. That won't be too difficult because stations are relatively small, ranging from eight (the first) to sixteen (the last) screens.

Your droid is a pretty slick piece of work. It looks a little like Dusty Bin with a rucksack, and you can see it from four sides. The head hobbles up and down and spins independently from the body, and sometimes you can see a pair of eyes peeping out.

The guard droids are well up to standard. As for the ramps and causeways . . . well I've seen better, but definitely nothing to complain about. Weapons are pretty imaginative too; frisbee-like disks, boomerangs, mortars and a bomb that bounces round corners.

I like *Magnetron.* It's similar in many wasy to the ageing Hewson classic, *Paradroid* (written by Steve Turner's stablemate, Andrew Braybrook), but it contains enough original features to make it playable and absorbing in its own right.

Bodhan Buciak

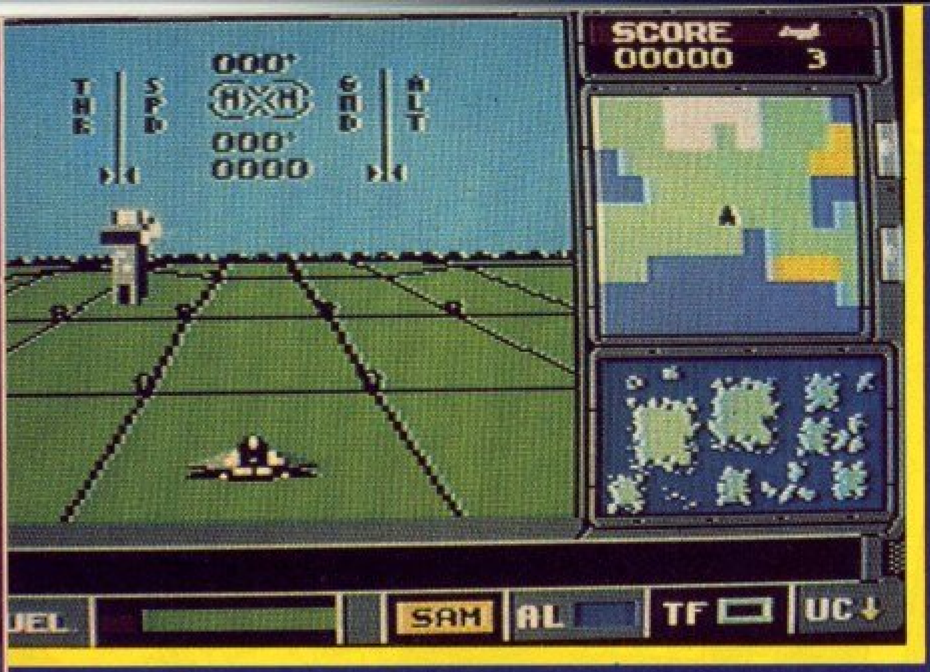


Mustn't tarry — get zapping!





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You're cleared for take off.



Take a good look at your operations sector.

64/128
Digital Integration
Price: £8.95/cass £12.95/disk

Let's not beat about the aircraft hangar, *ATF* is a superb flight simulator. ATF stands for Advanced Tactical Fighter and is based on an aircraft currently being designed for the U.S. Air Force by Lockheed, Boeing and General Dynamics. What worries me is that the prototype isn't due to fly until 1990 (so says the blurb).

This either means Digital Integration have buddies at the Pentagon or they're not too worried about details. The truth is neither — they've simply been browsing through lots of boffin aircraft mags for scraps of detail.

Anyway, what really sets *ATF* apart from the rest is its use of contoured landscapes. It's rather like flying over a huge hairnet, you can make out easily the undulations in the terrain by the contour lines. There are three types of terrain: green landscapes, the sea, and the Polar icecaps.

What's more, you get an on-board computer, sophisticated weapons, automatic flying and all kinds of hi-tech gadgetry that lets the pilot have a nap while his plane wipes out a complete enemy offensive. Actually, it's not like that at all, *ATF* keeps you on your toes like no other flight sim I've flown — er, played.

Apart from mere flying, and zapping planes and enemy installations, there's a modicum of strategy involved too. More about that later. Added to that is control by both joystick and keyboard. The joystick obviously flies the plane, but there are lots of keys to press, which helps give the impression that you're actually controlling the instruments and on-board computer. But let's get the plane flying.

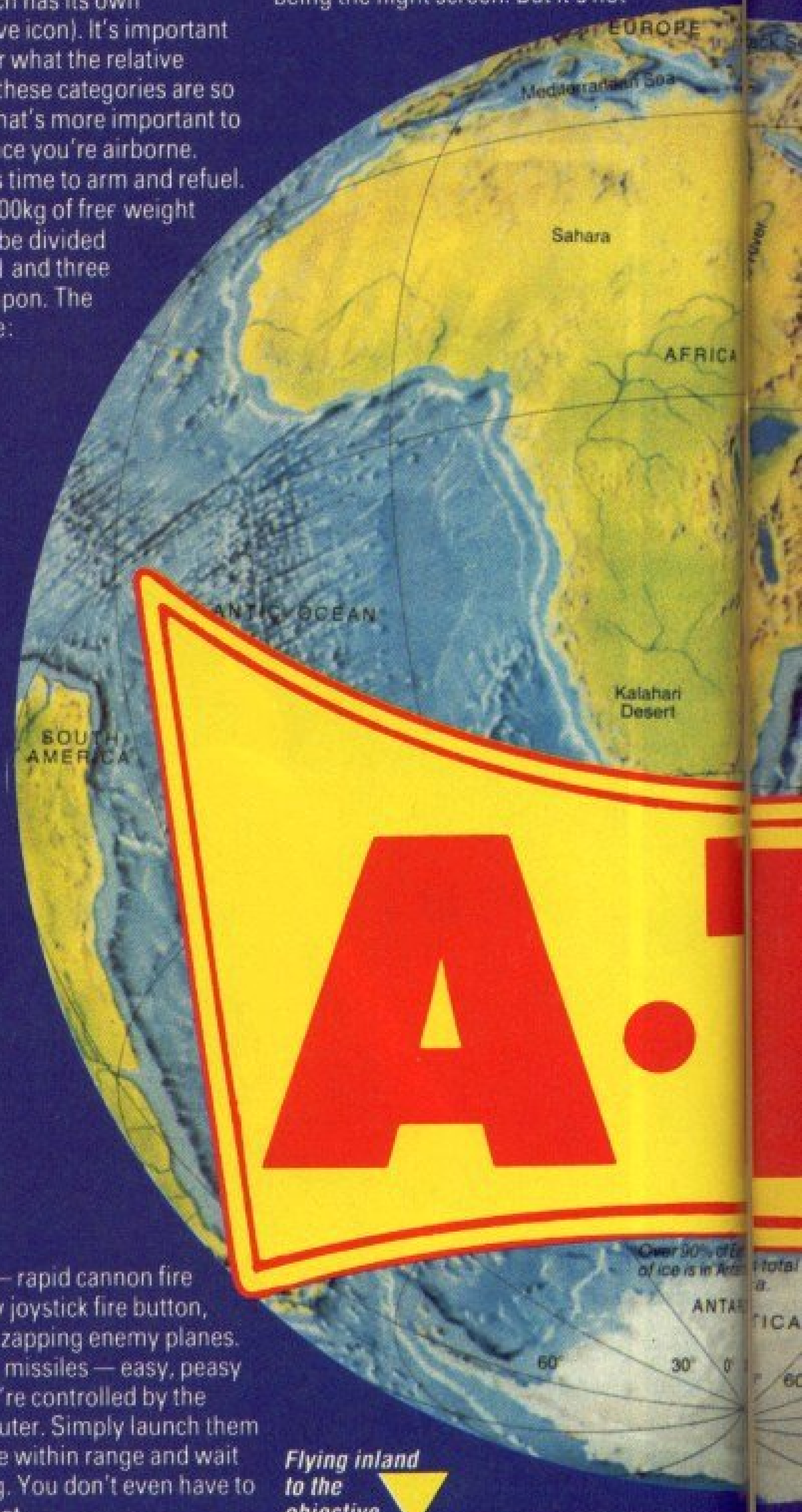
Like most flight sims, there are preparations to be made before taking off. First of all you see a map of the world ("a new world is generated each game" says the blurb) on which are marked both Allied and Enemy installations, and the position of your plane. The world is wraparound which means you can fly off one corner of the map and appear at the opposite side.

Next you see a war report which tells you how enemy power lines up with your own. There are five categories: bases, landforces, sea forces, communications and industry (each has its own representative icon). It's important to remember what the relative positions in these categories are so you know what's more important to knock out once you're airborne.

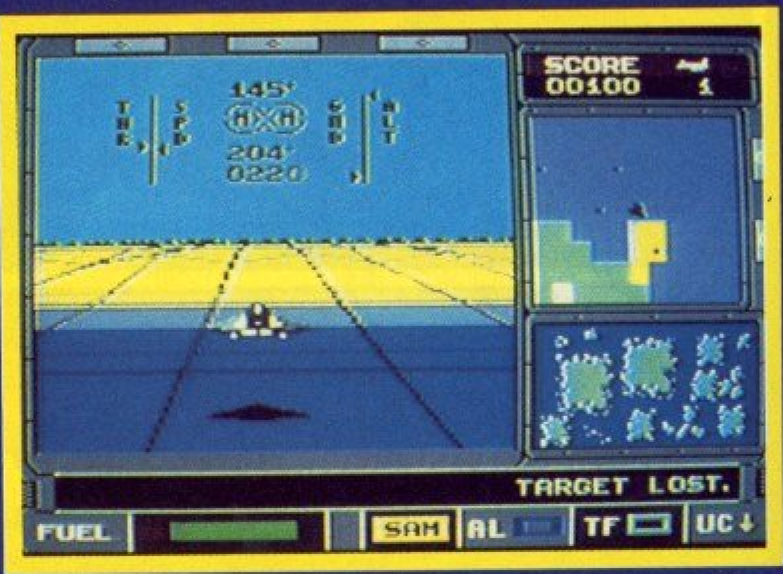
Finally, it's time to arm and refuel. You have 6000kg of free weight which must be divided between fuel and three types of weapon. The weapons are:

- Cannon — rapid cannon fire activated by joystick fire button, suitable for zapping enemy planes.
- Maverick missiles — easy, peasy these. They're controlled by the flight computer. Simply launch them when you're within range and wait for the bang. You don't even have to see the target.
- ASRAAM missiles — involve a lot more skill. These missiles are guided by your joystick to the target once you're in visual contact.

Now for the screen display. This is divided into three, the biggest part being the flight screen. But it's not



Flying inland to the objective.





truely flight sim because you see your own plane towards the bottom of the screen. Apparently, the computer generates the view, imposing upon it both the plane and information on thrust, height, range, bearing and what missile is currently in use. All that lot is depicted very neatly right in front of your nose. To the upper right is a map view showing your plane, the immediate vicinity and any enemy missiles, planes and installations.

Bottom left is the computer screen, probably the most important item. This section has five screens that toggle when you press 'C'.

- World map — indicates your position and the position of the enemy installation you selected in the computer database.
- Database — gives bearing and range for all allied installations and any enemy installations you fly over. The more you fly, the more information your computer acquires.
- Weapons status — shows how much firepower you have remaining for each of your three weapons.
- ATF status — gives you the status of your plane's vital functions in percentages.

Apart from that lot, in-flight messages scroll across the screen and, across the bottom, you have indicators for landing gear, approaching SAM missiles and a toggle-switch for auto-flying which hugs the contours of the land when engaged — take your hand off the joystick and watch the plane bob up and down across the terrain. Brilliant.

So how do you take out an installation? Typically it works like this. You choose a target from the computer database, and its range and bearing automatically appears on your flight screen. All you need to do is match your bearing with the installation's and wait until you're in range either to launch a Maverick or within visual range for an ASRAAM.

But it's not as simple as that. Enemy planes are constantly on the attack from all sides. Avoiding them usually involves swerving miles off course. Then there's the homing SAM missile warnings — quickly press the radar jamming button. There's height and thrust to watch too. These have a tendency to creep down the more you're damaged by enemy fire.

The thing that impresses me most is the ability to see enemy targets before you destroy them. Mind you, fly too quickly and you won't see any at all. This is the trickiest part of the game. Get well within range, slow down, watch the target appear, launch the ASRAAM and steer it towards the target with your joystick. It takes some doing.

Equally impressive is the automatic landing routine. You can land at any allied base to refuel at any point of the game. As soon as you're in the landing zone an indicator flashes. Now all you need do is engage auto-land and the computer takes over. Sit back and watch speed and height indicators move down, watch the aerodrome tower appear — touch down.

My only criticism of *ATF* (and it's a minor one) is that enemy planes are pretty easy to evade. Simply bank away from them and they'll eventually go away.

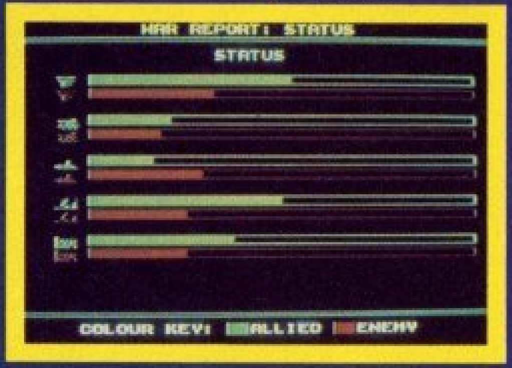
ATF is a very classy piece of programming indeed. It's graphically superb. It has enough depth to keep you hooked for a long, long time (there are eight levels of difficulty) and it's incredibly good value for the money. What more can I say? If you're after a flight sim with knobs on, look no further.

Bohdan Buciak

Load up on fuel and weapons for each mission.



Operations stauts screen.



Better lose that fighter on your tail pretty sharpish.

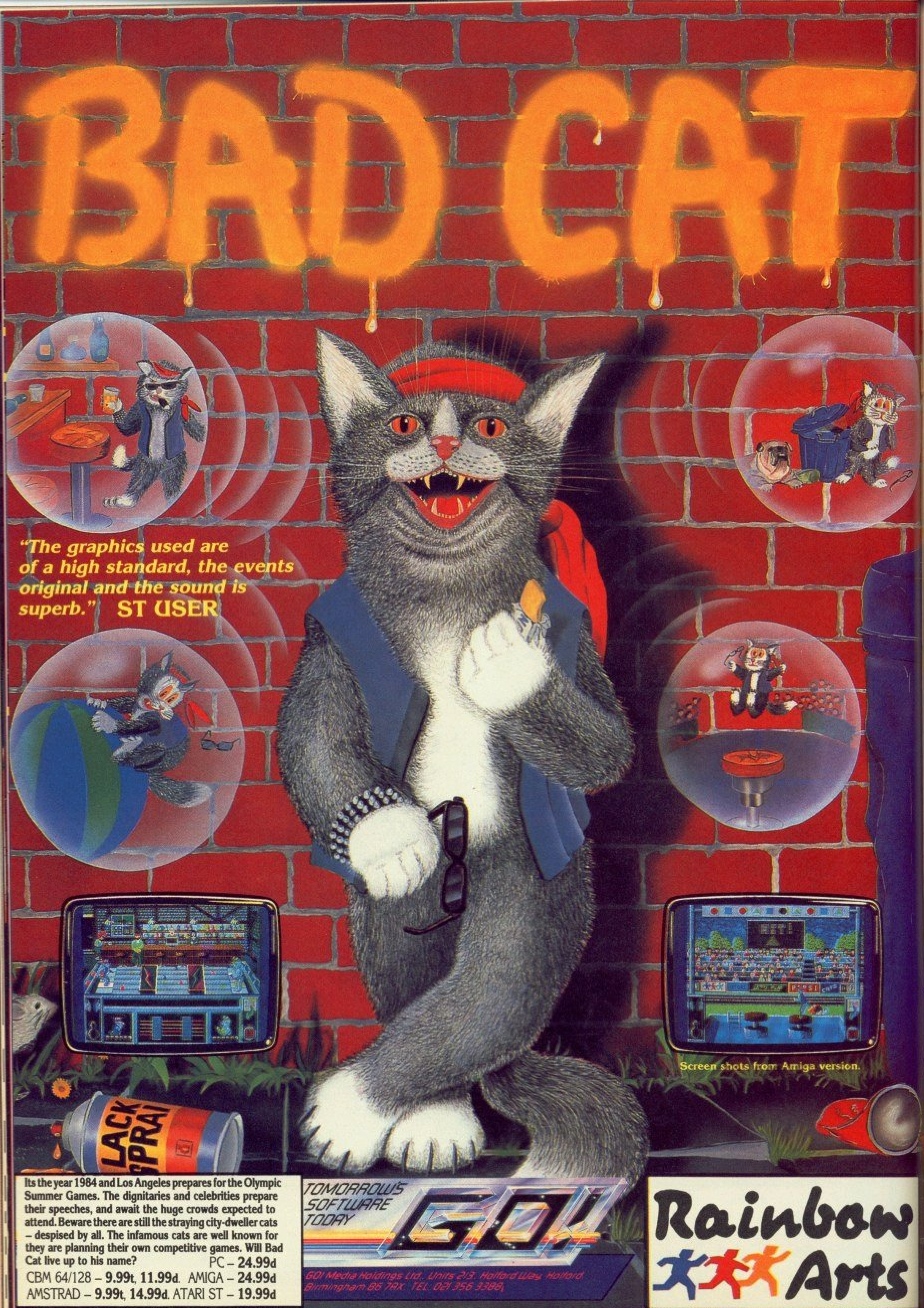


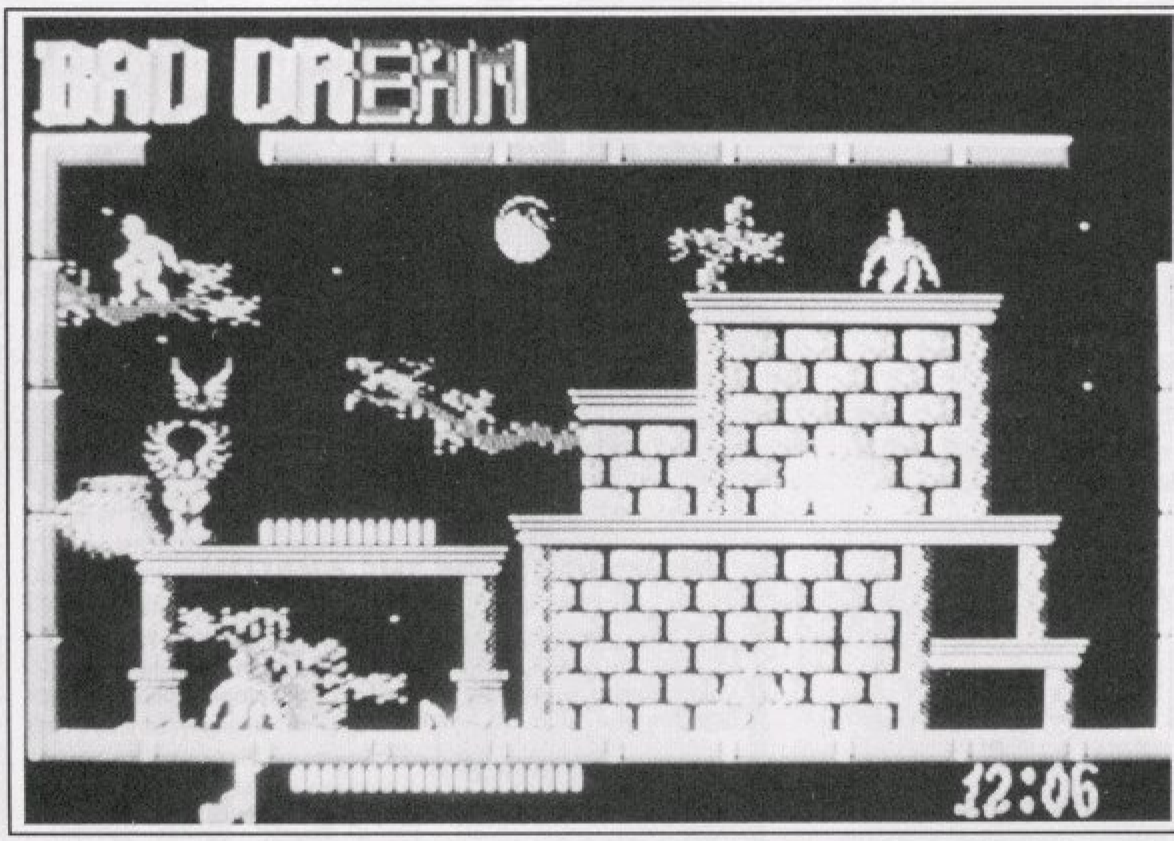
C.U. Screen Star

ATF — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10)

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
VFM

CU RATING **8**


BAD CAT
"The graphics used are of a high standard, the events original and the sound is superb." ST USER
Screen shots from Amiga version.
Its the year 1984 and Los Angeles prepares for the Olympic Summer Games. The dignitaries and celebrities prepare their speeches, and await the huge crowds expected to attend. Beware there are still the straying city-dweller cats – despised by all. The infamous cats are well known for they are planning their own competitive games. Will Bad Cat live up to his name?
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FRIGHTMARE

64/128
Cascade
Price:
£9.99/tape
£14.99/disk

You awake, not in the land of reality, but in the land of dreams. Bad ones. Dreams from which you cannot escape. You are trapped in the realm of *Frightmare*. A realm divided up into four dream zones, each more horrifying than the last. The forest, caverns, torture chambers, and, finally, the laboratory.

Although you do not possess the power to escape from your dreams, you do have the power to create some useful objects in the various dream zones, guns, teleporters, crucifixes, chalices and more.

The land of *Frightmare* is inhabited by hellish creatures. One story reads that long ago an evil European Prince had the hands cut off any peasants who could not pay their taxes. These hands are now condemned to roam forever the land of *Frightmare*. A race of people who once worshipped the moon became warped and are now condemned to spend eternity trapped between wolf and man. A rich Transylvanian family who made a pact with Satan so as never to be parted from their wealth, have now become part of *Frightmare*, rising from the ground as Zombies. There's a lot of weirdos in *Frightmare*.

To escape from *Frightmare*, you have to advance the clock from midnight to twelve minutes past eight. You do this by discovering new rooms, each room found adding another six minutes to the clock. Also you must raise the degree of your dream, from Bad Dream through Terrible Fantasy until finally, you reach the state of Nefarious Frightmare.

To help you in *Frightmare* you can get your hands on a host of objects of which nearly every one is needed if you're setting out to complete the game. You get the normal pistol with a generous smattering of bullets around the rooms, but these will not kill every single thing you meet. For the like of zombies, devils and werewolves, you need the silver gun and bullets. These are a lot harder to find but when you do dispose of something that can only be killed by silver it does have a big improvement on your dream rating. Crucifixes will freeze any little problems you might have and holy water is another offensive weapon, with a smart bomb effect it destroys any minor spectres on screen.

Frightmare is a large game, short on colour, but with some very nice graphics. The backdrops in several zones are repetitive, but well thought out. For instance, in the lab you have glass spheres with brains sitting in them, and large humans linked up to machines. But my favourite zone is the torture chamber where guillotines and hanging corpses set the tone. The critters are like most of the backdrops, two colour, which is a shame when you take into account how well animated some are. The wolfmen are great, they start off as normal humans who hunch over and transform into wolves. Your character is a nice clear size and well animated, but not really up to the standard set by the other sprites.

With the sonics you get the noise of the wind in the background coupled with a few uninspiring spot effects, nothing much there to bother about.

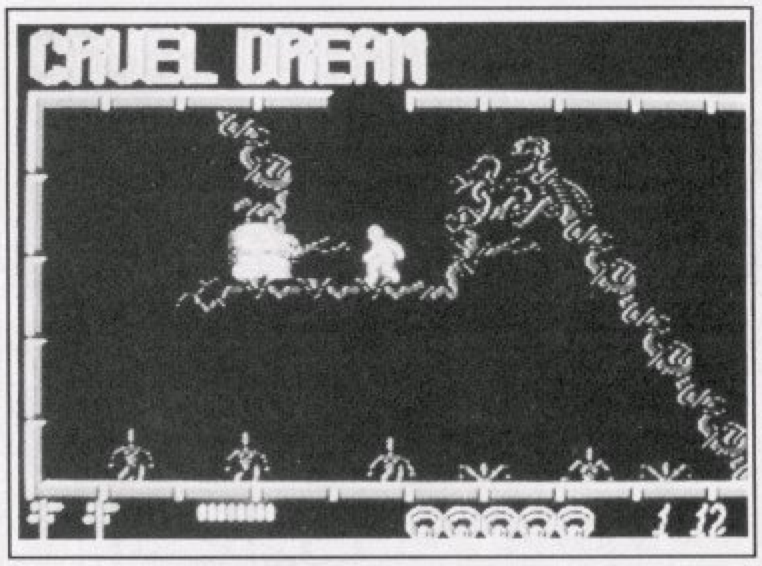
Frightmare is a good game if hard for its type (platform). If you like this sort of thing, check it out.

Mark Patterson

FRIGHTMARE — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	7
Audio	5
Toughness	8
Endurance	7
VFM	6

CU RATING: **6**



Demon STALKERS

64/128
Electronic Arts
Price: £9.95/cass £14.95/disk

Hmm, now where have I seen screen-shots like these before . . . ?

Two-player tactical action, a hundred omni-scrolling dungeon levels, assorted keys, food, magical items, and of course the nasties. . . Instead of ghosts, demons, lobbers and sorcerers, we've got ghosts, dervishes, snappers and mages.

As you (and your partner, if you choose) explore the mazes and vaults of Doomfane in search of the dread Calvrak, there are monster-generating vortexes to destroy with your ever-ready crossbow, doors to unlock, walls to destroy and exits to find.

Though there are no potions, there are 'smart bomb' death scrolls to collect, as well as extra units of strength, armour and magic. There are four mighty artifacts — sword, shield, Ring of Willpower and Staff of Life — hidden in Doomfane, and there are treasure chests full of goodies (a feature of the just-released *Gauntlet II*).

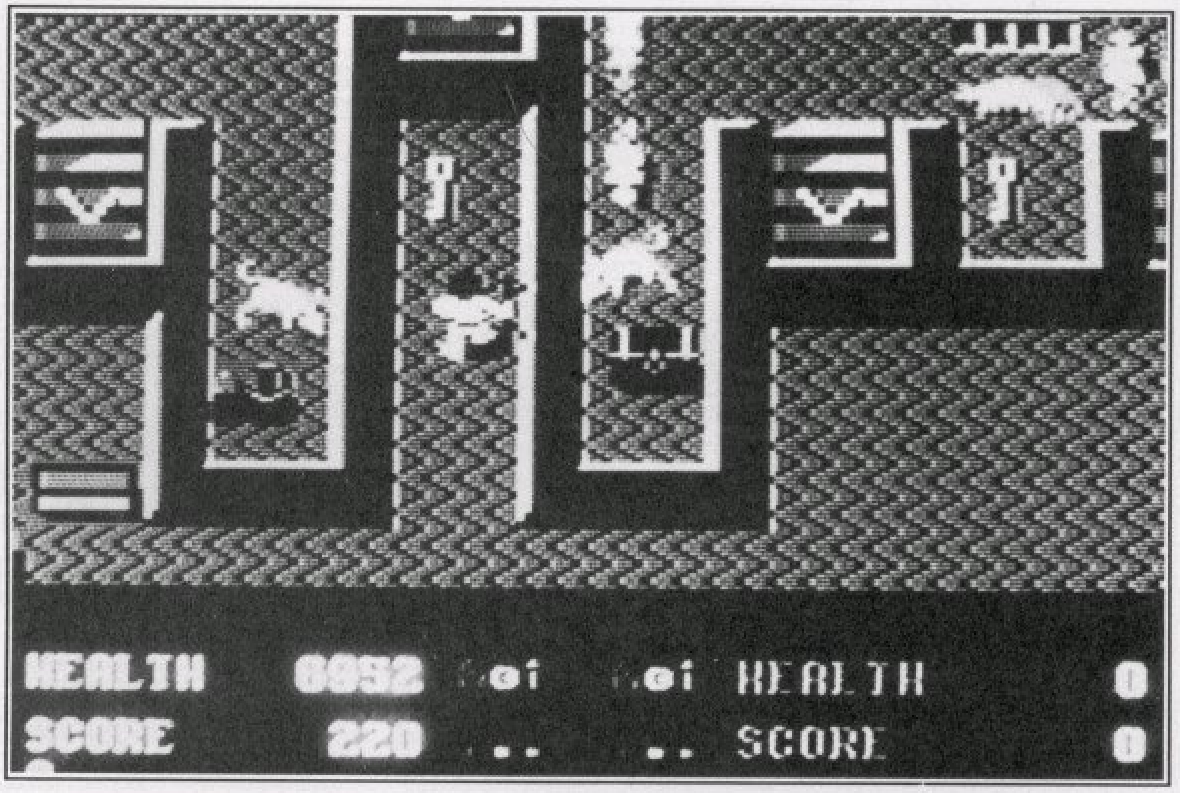
So what's new? And why should anyone want to buy such an obvious clone of a game released well over a year ago?

Without exactly over-taxing their collective imagination, the programming team of Micro Forté have added some new twists to the formula. All the frantic mayhem has been retained, but there's a strong emphasis on problem solving.

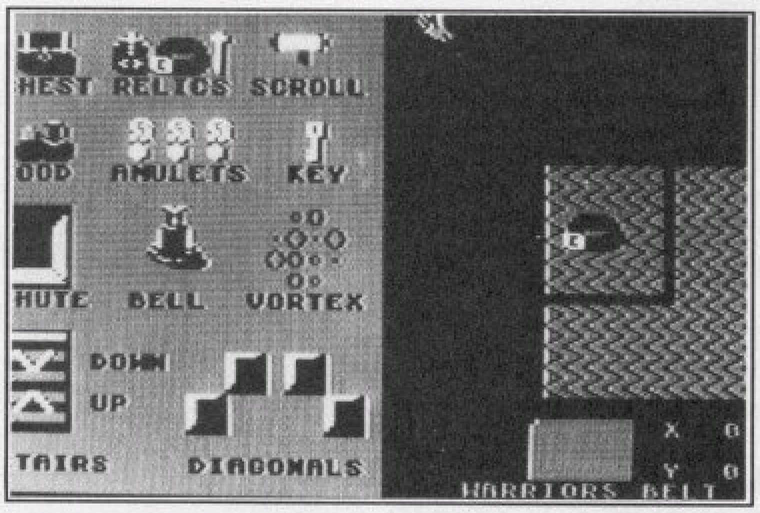
On every level cryptic scrolls can be picked up, mostly containing useful or even essential information about the current level, its dangers and layout. It's usually a good idea to collect these first, and thus avoid eating food which might be poisoned or opening chests containing ghosts.

But some of the scrolls are themselves booby-trapped, and I got carved up on Unlucky 13 when I picked up a Slow Death Curse scroll, giving me only seconds in which to reach the exit. The next scroll cheerfully told me that I'd also selected the longest route.

Sandwiched between certain levels are messages left by the last visitors to Doomfane, and these should be read carefully as you'll be questioned about them before you can progress to the next dungeon. And you'll also be asked a singularly bizarre question along the lines of 'what is the magical name for a frothing dusty koala?' I kid you not.



Shoot to kill . . .



. . . and build your own dungeons . . .

It is now that the curious circular gadget which fell out of the package when you opened it comes in useful. This is the legendary Magical Cypher, the sort of code-breaking device which used to be given away with *Eagle* and *TV21*. You rotate the wheels, line up the words, and read the resulting code through a little window. Partly a bit of fun, and also a highly effective anti-piracy device.

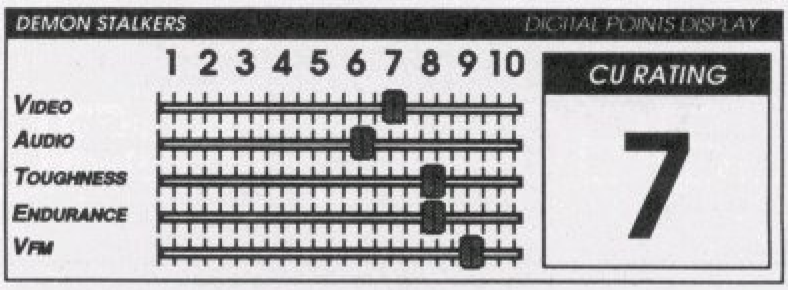
But *Demon Stalkers'* main attraction I've left until last. Included within the program is a comprehensive dungeon construction set, enabling you to create hundreds of new levels from scratch — right down to colour and pattern of the floor tiles.

You can build walls, place objects, choose monsters and set their speed, damage and killing capacities — you can do everything, in fact, that is included in the game itself.

This is all done with smooth, simple and fast pull-down menus and editing windows, and the finished dungeon can then be substituted for one in the game by using a back-up disk (full instructions provided).

As a *Gauntlet* look-alike with knobs on, *Demon Stalkers* isn't too much to write home about, particularly as the graphics and sound are nothing special. But as a DIY *Gauntlet* construction set which happens to have a 100-level game as a bonus, it's got to be good value.

Bill Scolding



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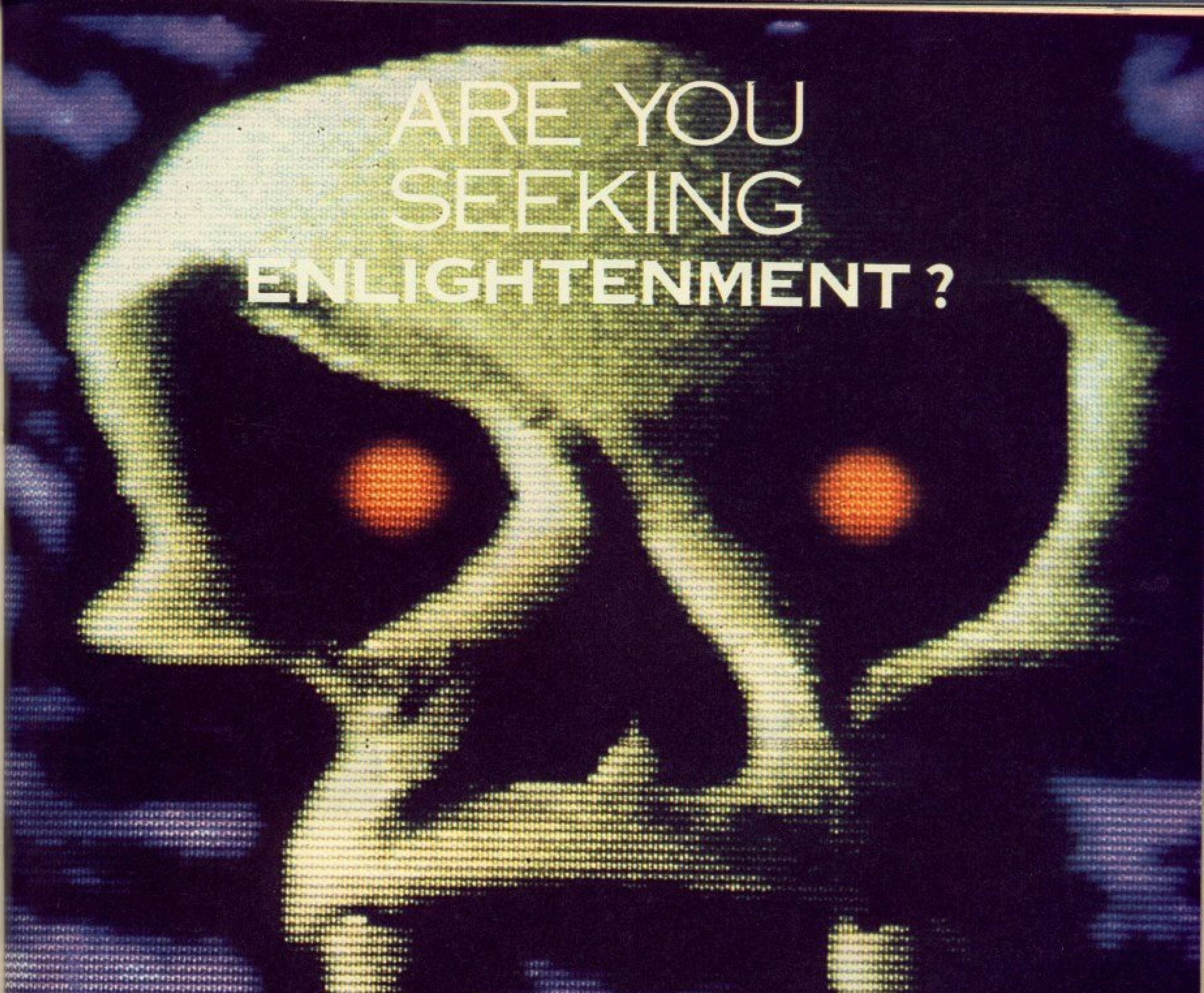
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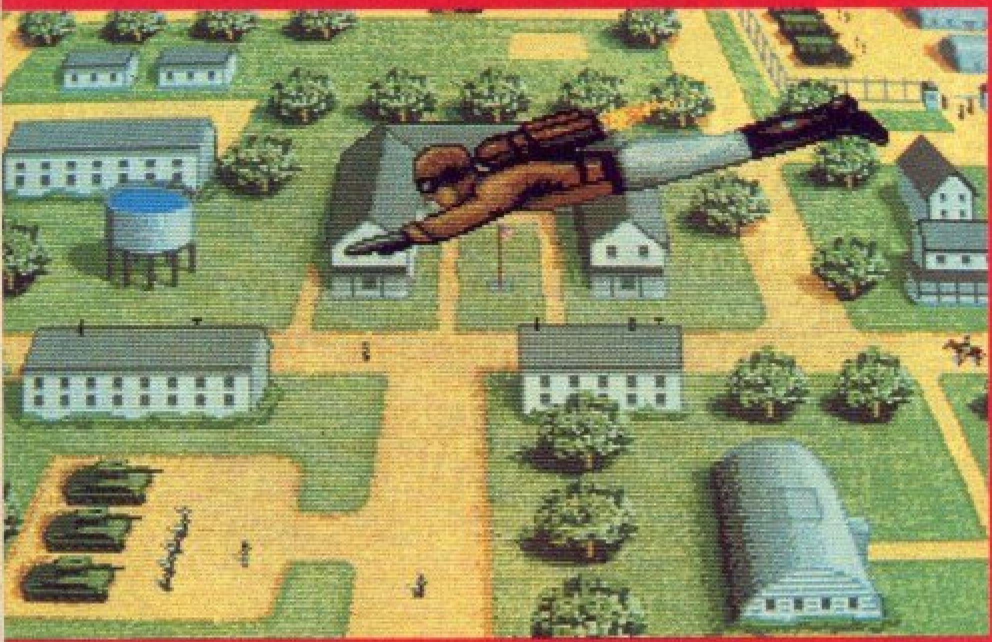


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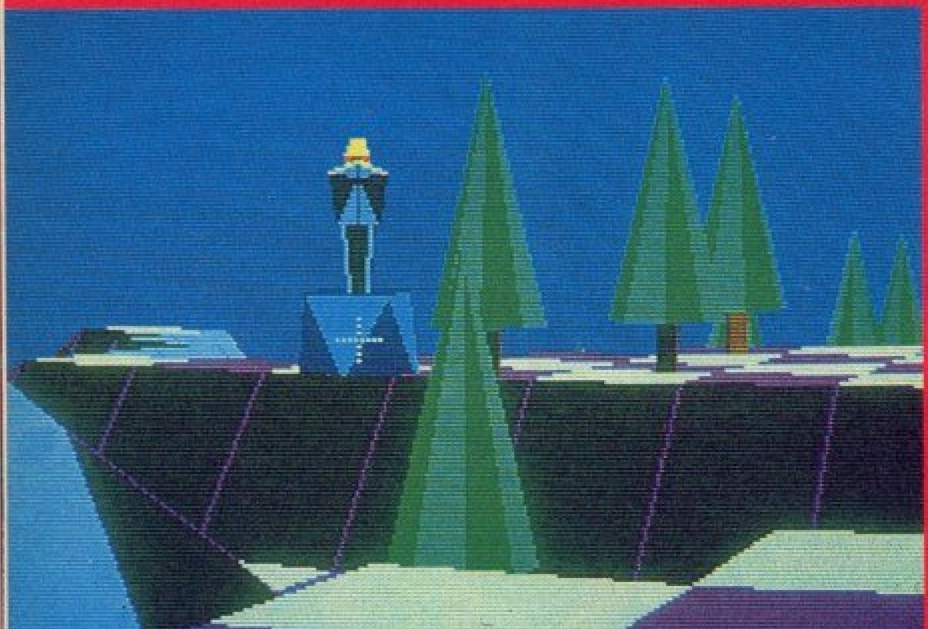
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AMIGA FUTURE S



PINK PANTHER

Star of screen, stage and T-shirt, the inimitable Pink Panther is due to stalk across the screens of your Amiga very shortly. Due for release by Magic Bytes/Gremlin, *Pink Panther* will find our felonious feline engaged as a slightly less-than-honest butler to a member of the aristocracy. You get to play the PP himself, and your task is, need we say, to half-inch everything that isn't nailed down from your master's mansion under cover of night. And who do you imagine is stalking the place trying to make your life more difficult? That's right, it's Inspector "Does your deug bite?" Clouseau himself. And to add to the merriment your master has a tendancy towards nocturnal perambulation (sleepwalking, you ignoramous) and has taken to strolling about after dark with his eyes shut. You've got to outwit Clouseau, avoid rousing your slumbering boss, and steal as many as many valuables as you can. Simple, really.



SENTINEL

If ever a game was screaming "convert me, convert me," it's Firebird's *Sentinel*. Released to euphoric reviews at the end of 1986 the chess-like game of skill and strategy had players burning the midnight oil, attempting to reclaim the 10,000 worlds swallowed up by the power hungry being they know only as the *Sentinel* by redistributing energy to inanimate objects like rocks and trees. You'll get your chance to knock the Sentinel off his perch after Easter.



LAST NINJA

System 3's 64 arcade adventure won accolades almost everywhere last year, and rightly so. We reckon it has the best graphics ever to appear on the machine. Now Amiga owners can get to grips with the evil Kunitoki themselves with System 3's first 16 bit conversion. Improvements include multiple warriors on screens, which will mean you'll have to fight more than one warrior at a time, and a timer which will help players gauge their progress and improving skills at the game. Listen out too for some wonderful sound and some great effects like the flowing rivers. We'll be bringing you a review of this one sometime in early summer. . .

SHOCK PREVIEW



F-18 INTERCEPTOR

For those who crave wild flight sims, Electronic Arts are about to release the quite superfab-looking *F-18 Interceptor.* Take charge of an F-18 Interceptor (that's the USAF's latest) and attempt to complete a series of testing missions, all staged in and around San Francisco's Bay Area. You can try your hand at beating off the fiends who want to shoot down Airforce-1 while it's attempting to land the president safely at San Fran's airport. Or perhaps you'd like to try preventing World War III by taking out approaching cruise missiles. You can also try rescuing a ditched pilot, carry out an aircraft identification mission or even volunteer for a top secret advanced-pilots-only task. Yup, the sky's the limit with *F-18 Interceptor.*

STARGLIDER II

Jaysan, the near eponymous hero of programmer Jez San is back with a sequel to the game that launched state-o-t'art shoot 'em ups on the Amiga. Blast-hungry souls will soon be able to get mucky once again with filled in 3D solids and sampled sounds. Armed with a new spacecraft you head into the solar system to free it from the grip of the Egron empire, you rumbustious young turk you. On your travels you discover weird beings that look like packworms and whales. Well it could happen and it will. . .



NEWS

JOLLY GOOD COMPILATION

Beau Jolly have announced the release of one of the first compilations for the Amiga. Retailing at £29.95, this four game package is drawn from the back catalogues of Activision and Psygnosis. From Psygnosis come *Ratticus* and *Deep Space*, while Activision contribute *Hacker II* and pet person package *Little Computer People*. This compilation should be in your local softshop any second now.

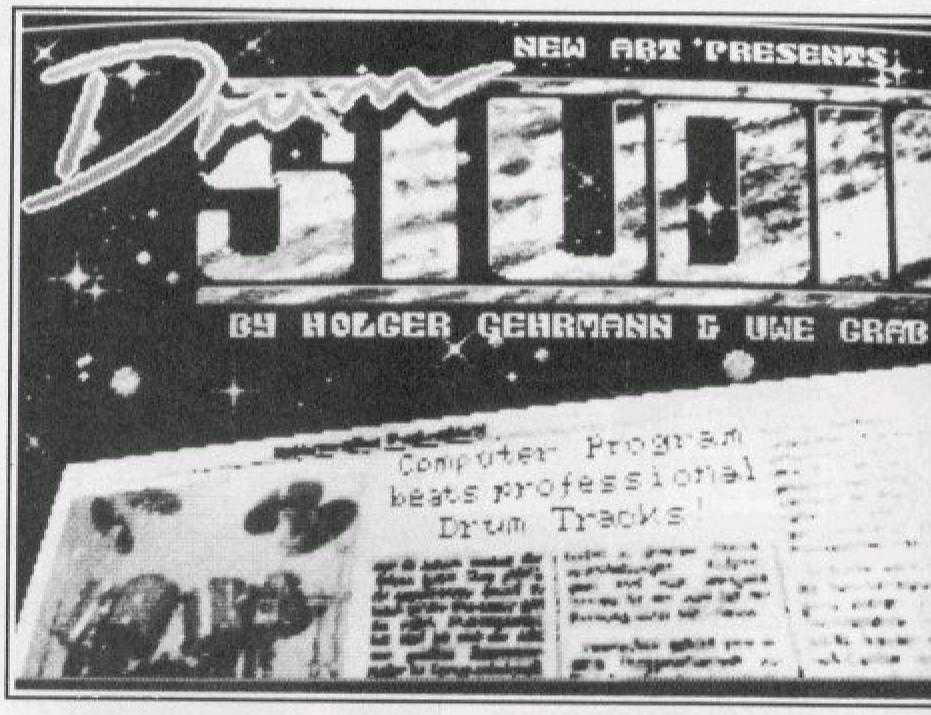
RAINBIRD'S NAME GAMES

Word reaches us of an intriguingly named product in the pipeline from Rainbird. *EPT* is what's known as a "working title", which means that the finished product may carry a different title. Or in this case, we'd say, will almost *definitely* carry a different title. The official meaning of the acronym *EPT*, according to a Rainbird spokesperson, is a quaint reference to a well-known American medical product for Early Pregenancy Testing. This, it seems fair to say, might be a wee bit dodgy as a name for a 3-D vector graphic shoot 'em up. But, even more scandalously, some dastardly types have been whispering in our ears that the three letters actually stand for *Elite P☆ss Take*.

Needless to say, this latter explanation has been strenuously denied by Firebird. But what with the fact that the said *EPT* does bear a more than passing resemblance to sister company Firebird's *Elite*, well, we're not sure what to think. But we *have* heard that, whatever's behind is weird "working title", *EPT* is an absolutely white-hot blast 'em up. We understand that the final product will soon be with us, on the Amiga — but you'll just have to watch this space to find out the name!

16-BIT BUDGET

Telecomsoft have just announced that several of their most popular budget titles, including *I-Ball* and *Thrust*, are currently being converted for the Amiga. These titles will retail for just £9.95 a shot, and will be released on Telecomsoft's newly-relaunched budget label, Silverbird. And, according to a spokesperson, we can expect to be seeing lots more of these 16-bit bargains from Silverbird over the coming months. Mmmm — good!



LAYING DOWN A BEAT

Home musicians, bedroom rappers and noise merchants who own Amigas will be happy to hear of two drum machines just on the market for their micros called *Adrum* and *The Drum Studio*.

The Drum Studio is a German programmed package from Robtek which allows you to enter the build drum patterns around twenty different digitised sounds. These are stored in two banks, accessed by the control and shift keys, and implemented by the function keys. these can be changed by altering pitch and volume. For those of you who cannot conceive of writing anything at less than 120 bpm there's an option to speed up and slow down.

The second package is British produced and comes from newcomers Bulldog Productions. *Adrum* contains 26 different sounds including a hysterical laugh and wonderfully disgusting belch. These are all accessed from the QWERTY keys.

Adrum's biggest plus is that it can be linked up with a Midi interface to a drum machine or synthesiser. Whichever one you choose it'll only set you back £39.95, which is a lot less than yer average real live drum machine.

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GALASHIELS
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WORLDWIDE ·SOFTWARE·

WORLDWIDE SOFTWARE
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STAR WAYS

Amiga
Diamond
Price: £19.95



With all the Amigas and STs we're told exist in Germany you'd expect a plethora of quality releases from programmers who have had some time to perfect and advance their techniques on 16 bit machines. Not so.

For every good game you see there are another half a dozen which are totally derivative and uninspired. *Starways* definitely falls into the latter category, being to all intent and purposes a complete rip-off of Gremlin's *Trailblazer* and *Cosmic Causeway* series.

I'll say one thing for the Germans though — they don't bother trying to hide it. *Starways* comes to you with screenshots and an almost apologetic bit of blurb on the packaging. The basic implication is 'here's a *Trailblazer* clone, you know how to play it so get on with it.'

A typically nice bit of loading screen and sampled music follow your booting the disk but the game is a flat and uninspired version of the original which I must admit didn't grab me like it did others when it appeared. The implications seem to be that *Starways,* who are credited on the loading screen, are a demo crew. It shows.

The basics of the game are clear. You have a fat baby figure who ploughs up the screen and has to make it through the various zones within a time limit. Holes and tiles help and hinder you by causing you to fall through or jump over gaps. Put simply you have seven jumps and 99 seconds to complete each level.

After three levels I found myself wondering where the other elements were, so I consulted the pack again. No hints. So I carried on but soon found my interest waning. The road is long and sorry and there's little comfort to be had by way of new features. The jumps are the same, the colours the same, the game the same.

If Diamond were happy to do a clone they should have at least tarted it up a bit. 16-bit versions of old 8-bit games just won't do when they're hacked over like this. Not any more.

Mike Pattenden



Somersaulting for survival.



Things are hotting up in the land of fire.

Beware the horned beasts.

ENLIGHT

AMIGA

Firebird
Price: £19.99

Grab the spell.

Enlightenment, on the Firebird Gold range, is the sequel to last year's pretty successful Gauntlet-clone *Druid*, which has never appeared on the Amiga.

What it really amounts to is more of the same with a fair amount of shooting the undead hordes with electronic bolts, a need for careful exploration of the terrain, control over your 'elementals' who will help you on your quest, and a real hefty whack of spell-casting. Mostly, these game elements occur simultaneously.

The plot runs as follows: you are Hasrinaxx, a druid, who in the game of the same name, expelled Acamantor from the lands of Belorn. Now, 103 years later, Acamantor is back, and out for revenge. He's turned all your fellow-Belornians into undeads, and only you can seek out his domain and vanquish him forever, expulsion being too good for him this time round. And quite right too.

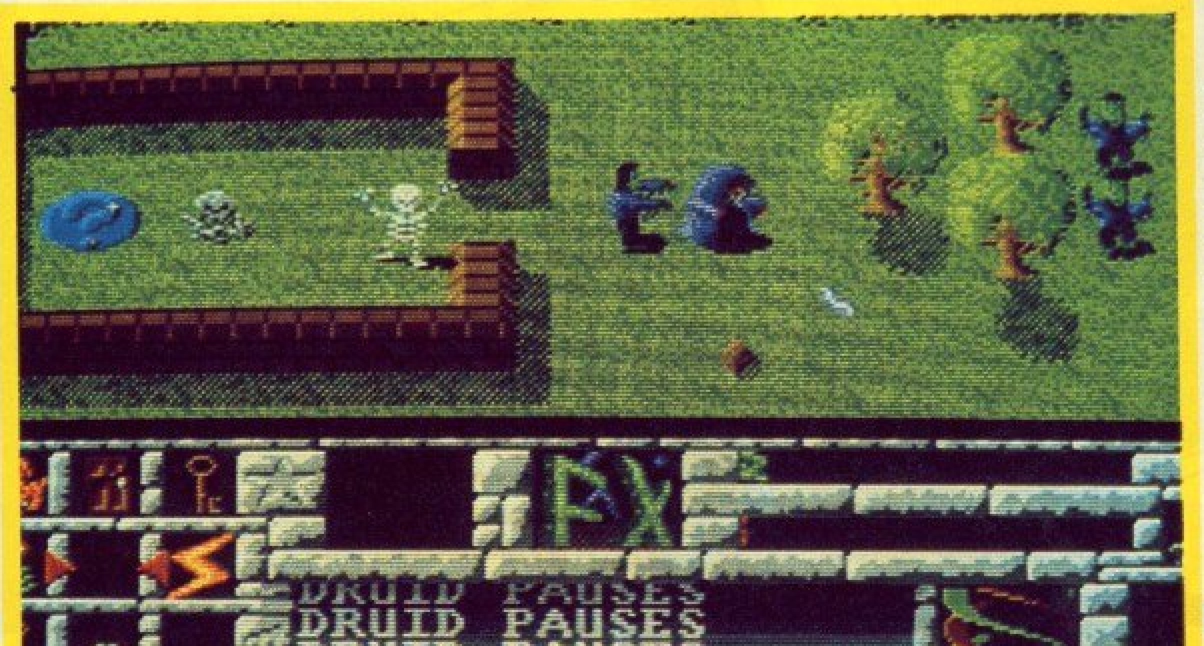
Your travels in search of Acamantor take you over the ten lands of Belorn, and eventually into Acamantor's five-level dungeon. There are distinct types of terrain within the lands, some screens look like English gardens, others semi-desert, others marshy. You need to take the terrain into account when conjuring your elementals.

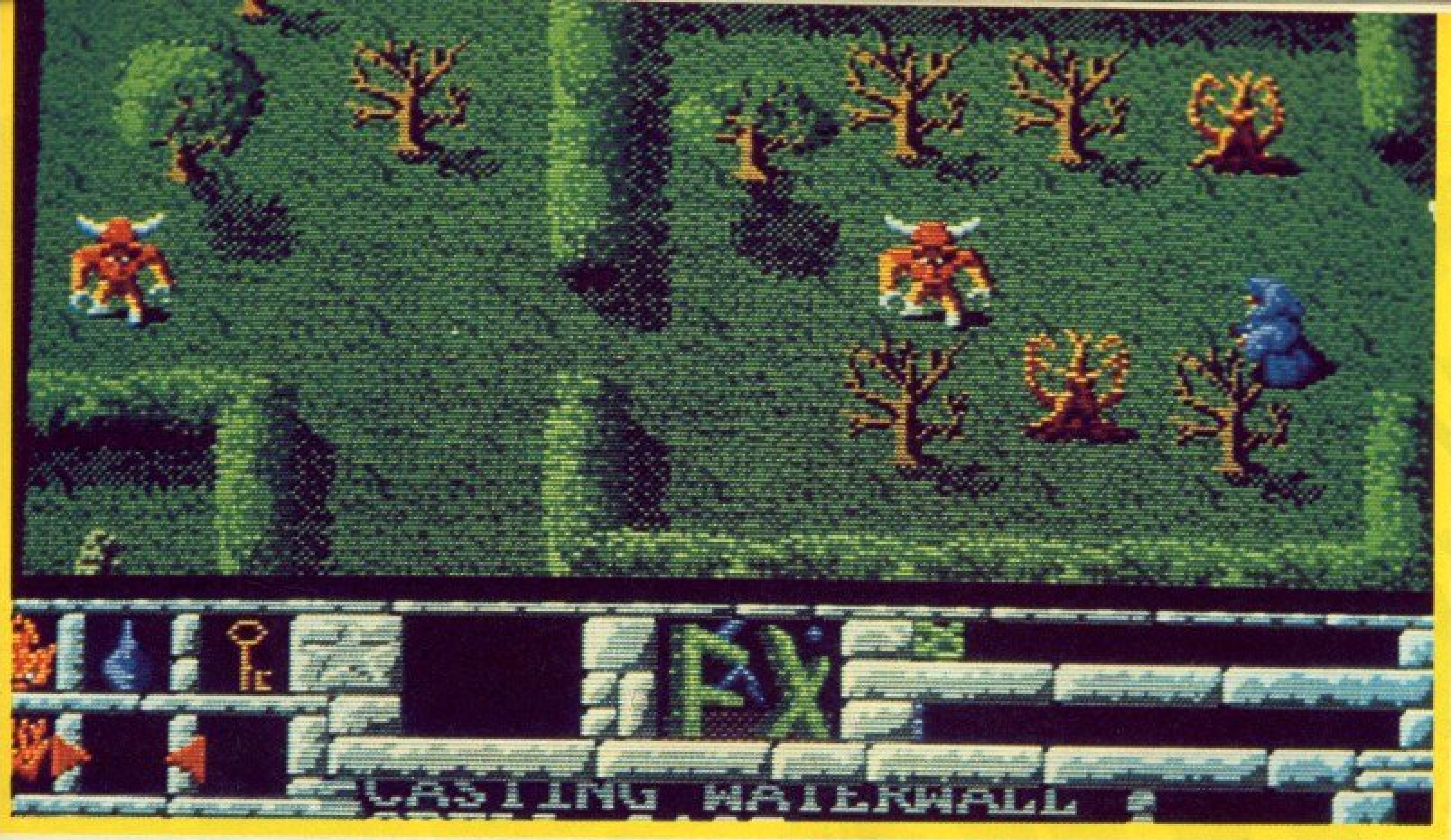
The elementals each represent one of the four elements: earth, wind, fire and water, and can be incarnated if you have the relevant spell. They help you fight Acamantor's demons and the undead — though to a limited extent, since you can only control them by telling them to wait, follow you or go in a certain direction. Also, Phoenix the fire elemental is pretty useless in wet or marshy areas, while the Kraken (water) doesn't like the desert much.

They have another purpose, however, in that a second player can take control of the elemental, turn-



Druids hate water.





Things are hotting up in the land of fire.

Beware the horned beasts.

ENMENT



ing *Enlightenment* into a co-operative two-player game.

Then there are no less than 28 other spells to find, take and cast at opportune moments. Your spell-book can only hold eight spells at any one time, so some juggling around may be necessary to make sure you have the ones you want.

The game is presented from a bird's eye view, and is done very well. You can actually see your character as a whole person, while retaining the perspective, rather than a circle which is meant to represent the top of his head as in so many 'top-down' games. The undead materialise from out of the ground at every turn, while the deserts and marshes have their own creepy-crawlies to be dealt with. The movement and scrolling is smooth; until you move into a different type of terrain, that is.

The graphics are excellent: clear and colourful and well-defined. The music, which comprises a 'signature tune' and background tunes, is also superb and adds enormously to the atmosphere of the game — and there's some wonderfully evocative speech on the introductory screen.

Enlightenment is a big game — which I suppose is a euphemistic way of saying I don't think I've got very far in it yet, and with all those various objectives to keep in mind (shooting bolts, finding and casting spells, controlling elementals, trying to find Acamantor's hideout) you need to keep your wits about you. A relaxed blast or pixie romp this certainly isn't.

Christina Erskine

AMIGA

ENLIGHTENMENT — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO

AUDIO

TOUGHNESS

ENDURANCE

VFM

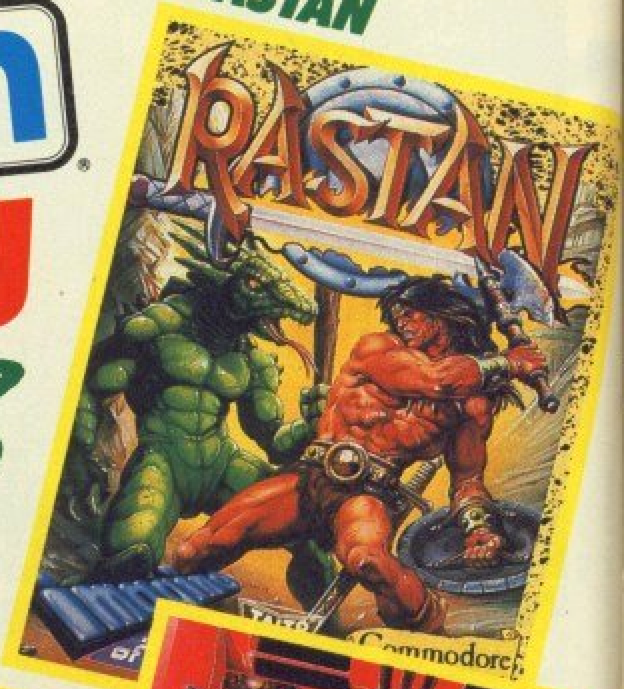
CU RATING

8

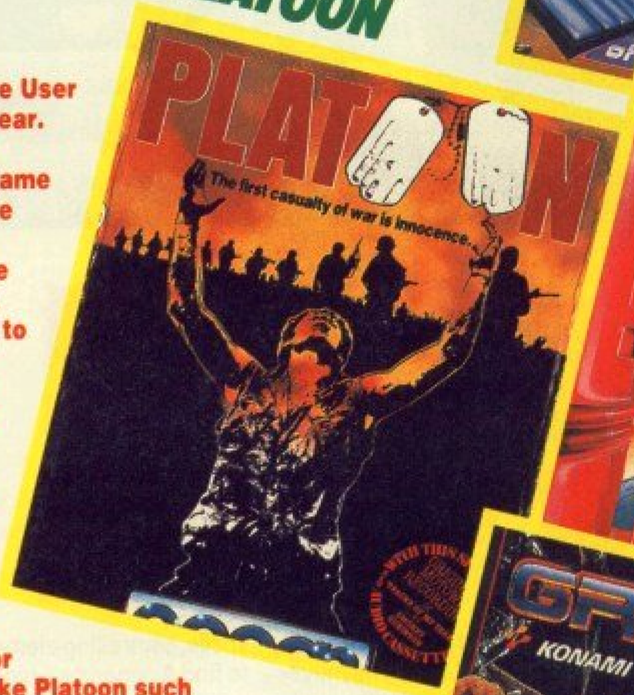


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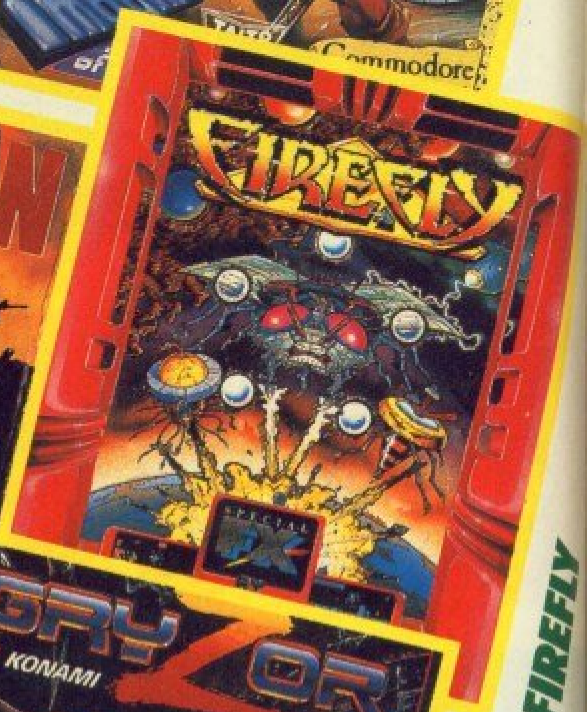
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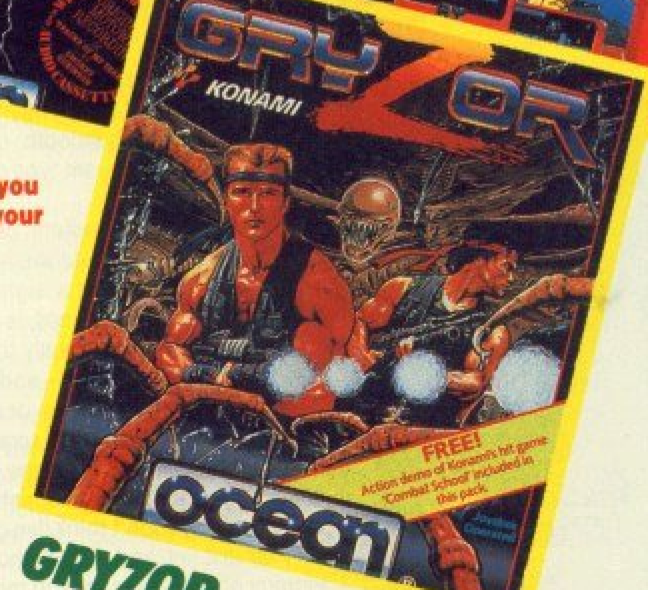
PLATOON



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GRYZOR



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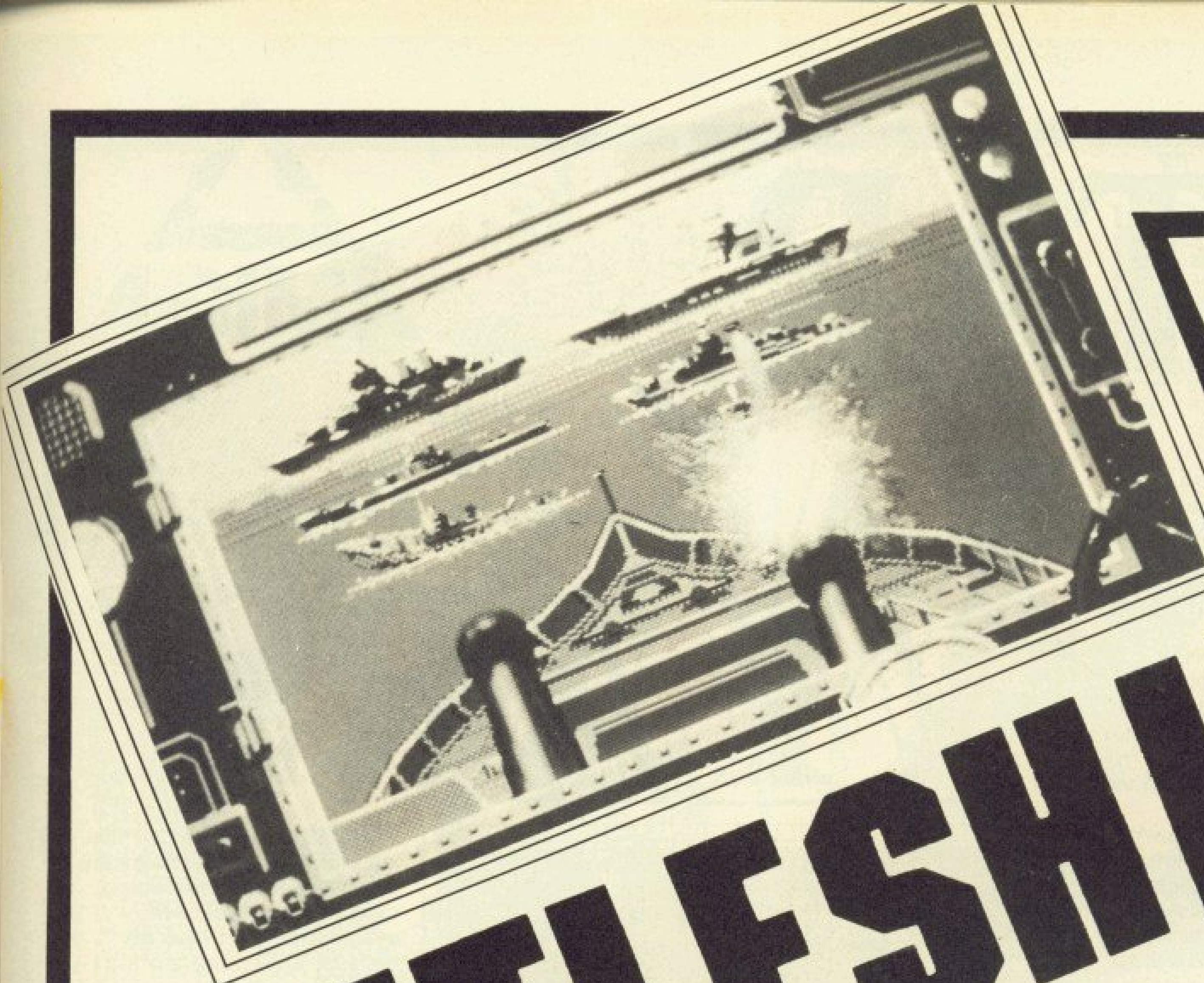
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BATTLESHIPS

AMIGA

Elite

Price: £19.99

This is the game, many of you may remember, which Elite programmed for the 64, advertised, sent out for review and subsequently withdrew because "it wasn't up to scratch". That, you may also remember, was after I said it was jolly good fun and much better than playing on scraps of paper. Aren't I the complete pillock?

Not really. The 64 version has subsequently appeared on a one of Elite's many compilations and they have budget plans for it. If it appears for a couple of quid take my advice and snap it up, because it's a bargain. It's neat, unfussy and absorbing and what's more the 16 bit version doesn't differ a great deal from it.

I mean there's not a tremendous lot you can do with a game like *Battleships*, it's so simple that you risk going over the top trying to tart it up and turn into a *Carrier Command* or something.

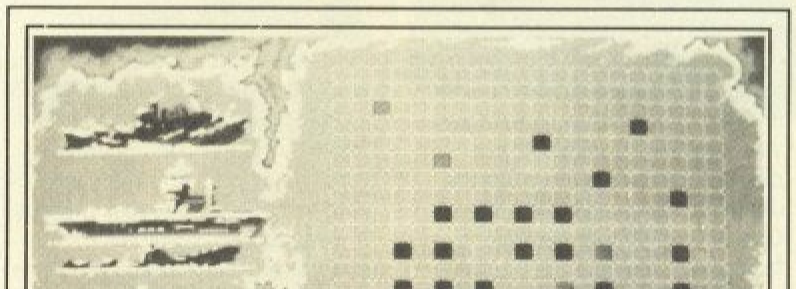
The gameplay, for anyone who hasn't seen the original or sat around on a wet Sunday afternoon and played it on a bit of their maths book, is simple. Construct a large grid, as big as you like as long as you can produce decent coordinates from it, and put down a set of shapes constructed from squares. To fire at each other you simply call out the coordinates. This the 64 version all managed very adequately. So how does the 16 bit version merit appearing on the shelves when the 8 bit version was deemed not good enough?

Well, erm, it's quicker, and it's got speech. The computer lays down its salvos in no time at all and a BBC World Service Voice says "Fire 12 shots at enemy" in a deadpan voice. All of which doesn't amount to a great deal.

The graphics really aren't of that much consequence anyway, but the Amiga has an animated screen where the cannons fire a salvo of shells. In this version the guns fire very realistically but, oh no, the ships don't sink, they get a bit flattened and then they just disappear.

So what we have is a slightly more polished version of a game you could buy for a couple of quid except it's going to cost you closer to twenty in this format. Take my advice, buy the cheapo when it appears and put the rest towards a 64 emulator.

Mike Pattenden



▲ *Good, clean fun . . .*

AMIGA

DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

BATTLESHIPS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

6

STAR WARS

AMIGA

Amiga
Domark
Price: £19.95

Take a listen to this and see if it sounds familiar. An evil emperor holds sway over a distant galaxy far away. He lives in fear of rebellion so he builds a huge battlestation with awesome firepower.

Meawnwhile a young farmer, Luke Skywalker, discovers his destiny, rescues a princess, meets a space pirate and joins the rebellion. The rest is cinematic history.

In this Amiga version of *Star Wars — the game*, your fighter is equipped with eight shields and four lasers, with which you have to fend off the entire empire's elite fighter squadron. This is the first stage. The battle takes place some distance from the battle station itself with the enemy fighters swooping in at all angles blasting fireballs at your lone craft. Under your shield status it does in fact say shoot fireballs but this is only to protect your shields, it's the fighters you want.

The vector graphics on this section are pretty neat, especially Darth Vader's own customised fighter which really does look good as it weaves around the screen. Vader's fighter is the only craft you cannot destroy on this level, if you hit it, it spins out of control for a short while before correcting and coming at you again. The only thing lacking on this stage from the arcade version is the great noise the enemy fighters make as they scream past your ship. The laser blasts are different, sounding more like the digitised machine gun fire from *Operation Wolf* than the old fashioned zap effects.

The second stage involves flying over the surface of the station blowing hell out of everything. You get this section on level two and above, but on level two you only get laser bunkers as opposed to the laser towers which figure on level three and above. At the start of the level you are told how many tower tops to destroy for a fifty-thousand point bonus, plus a running total throughout the level on how many points the next tower is worth.

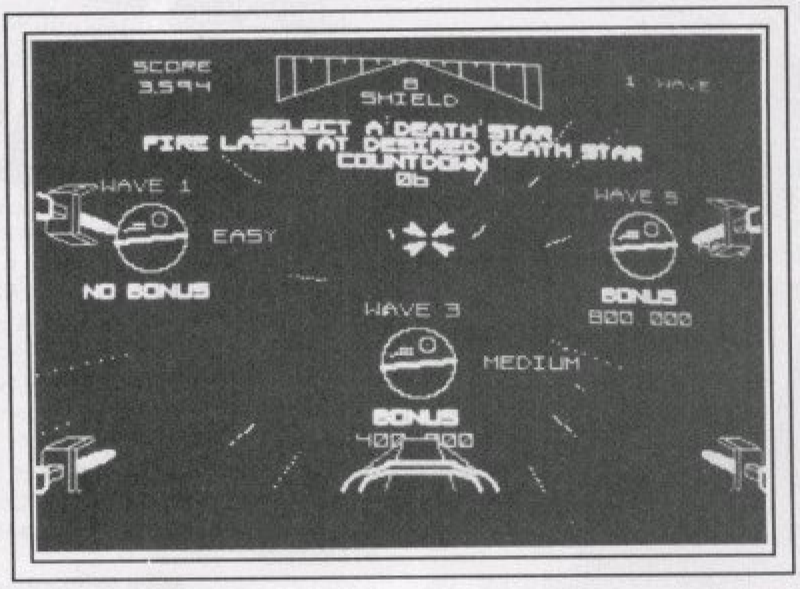
The last stage is the trench section. Along the sides are laser gun emplacements, who, as soon as you reach the same altitude as them open up on you with fireballs. On level two and above you get cat walks spanning the trenches which have to be avoided. On level seven the catwalks sometimes take up the whole width of the trench with only a small negotiable gap near the middle. At the end of the trench is the exhaust port, you know when you've reached it because the voice of freebooter Han Solo blurts out, "You're all clear kid, let's blow this thing and get home." So sight up on the port and let rip with a barrage of laser fire. A direct hit will result in your torpedos being launched and your craft flying away from the station just in time to see it erupt. If you miss you collide with the force shield at the end of the trench, lose a shield and have to repeat the stage again.

When the level is completed you get your score tacked up and are given an extra shield along with the voice of Han Solo this time saying "Great shot. That was one in a million kid." And so to the next level.

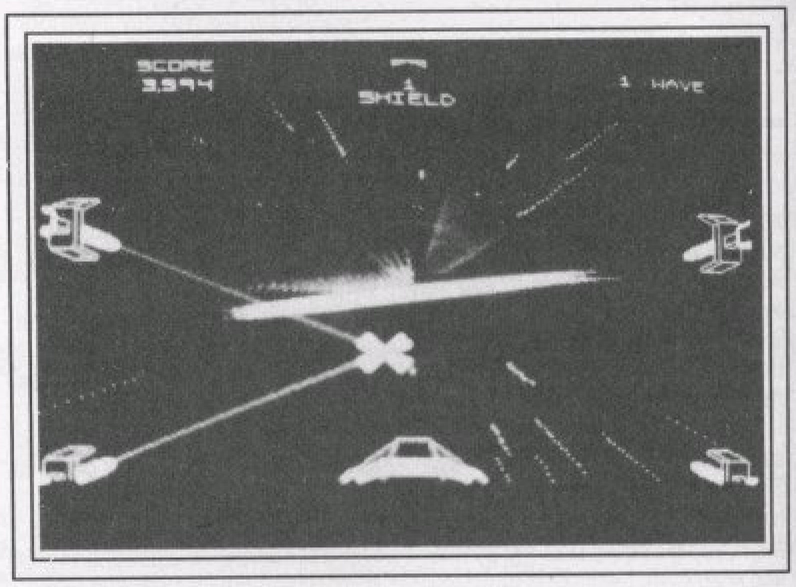
Star Wars is an accurate conversion in most respects, the speech is there, but rather than being digitised from the arcade version it sounds as though it was lifted straight from the film with the incidental music still hovering in the background. It's also unintentially camp as an awestruck voice exclaims when you fly over the battlestar "Look at the size of that thing!" The graphics are as smooth as might be expected but not always fast. In the stage where you fly over the surface of the battle station the whole game slows down to about half speed. Apart from that I have no other complaints.

It might sound as though game appeal might be limited with only three stages, but *Star Wars* plays well enough to overcome this hurdle.

Mark Patterson



Select an attack level.



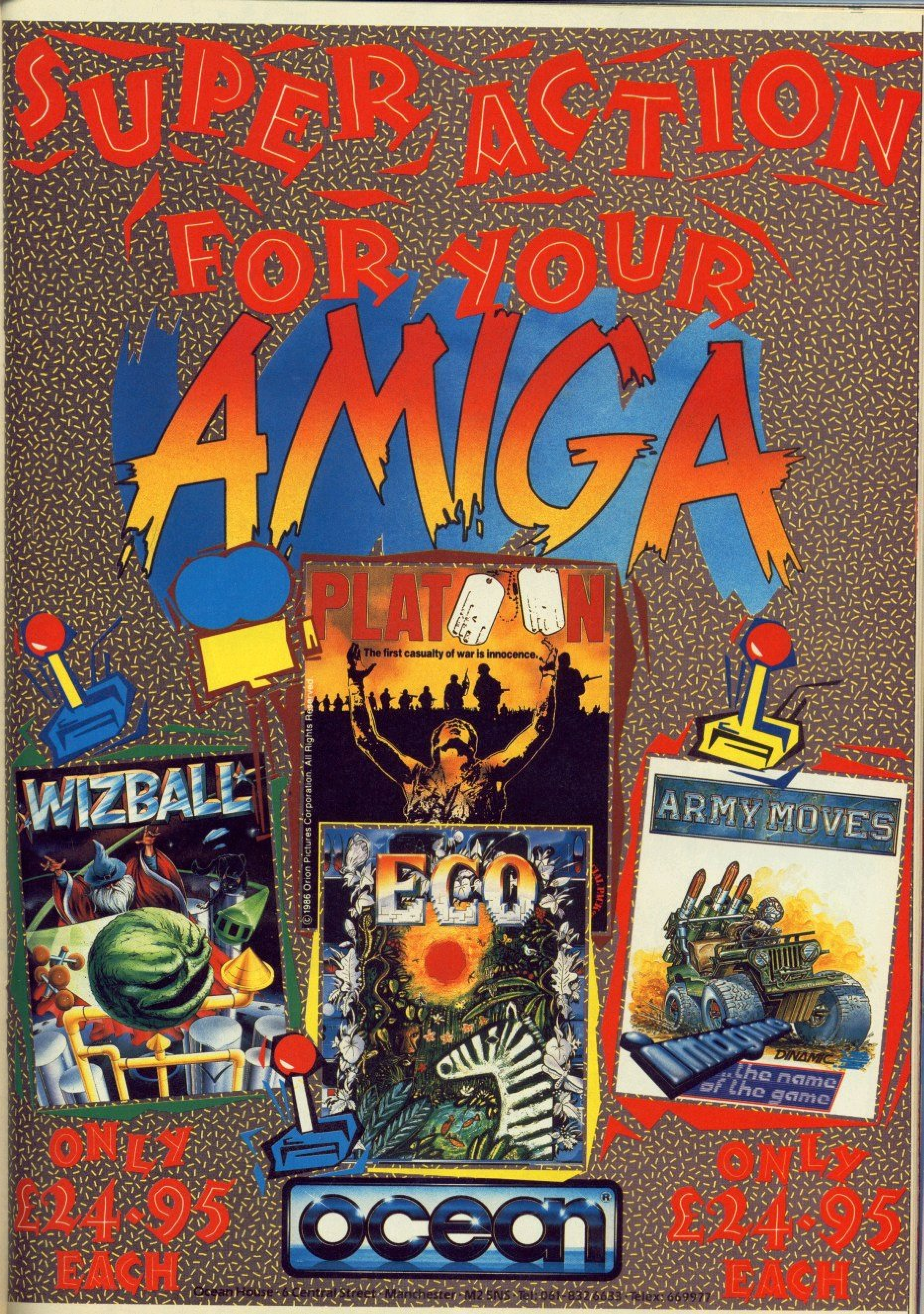
Great shot! One in a million kid . . .

STAR WARS — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	7
AUDIO	8
TOUGHNESS	6
ENDURANCE	6
VFM	6

CU RATING

7


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:DESTROYER:

Amiga
Epyx
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If I had to level one criticism at most of the conversions I play, particularly those from 8-bit machines, it is that, apart from superficial changes to the graphics, the programmers have made no attempt to really adapt the game for the Amiga. One such example of this is *Destroyer*, in which you take on the role of a battleship commander based somewhere in the Pacific, sometime during World War II (nothing like a bit of generalisation, eh?).

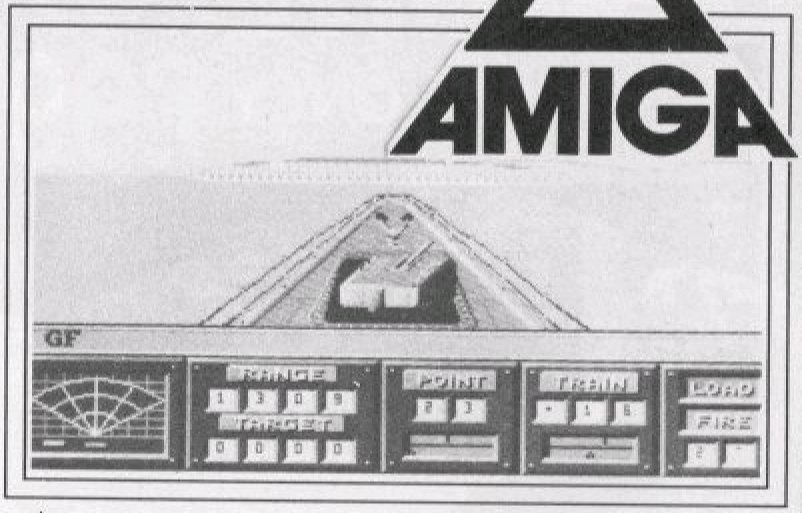
To add to the realism of the game, you appear to be the only man on the ship, so you must man all thirteen different outposts yourself. In effect this means navigating, checking the radar and sonar, and killing the enemy. Now this would all be very well and good if the game could make its mind up about whether it wants to be a realistic war-simulation, or a simplified shoot-'em up. Unfortunately it can't.

To be fair to the game, it does have a good (ish) side. The different scenarios you can take on range from the mundane — find one submarine, to the ridiculous — rescue a pilot and defeat the whole enemy fleet and air force. But even the most complicated mission requires extreme patience before anything exciting happens (if indeed it ever does). What makes the game even more annoying is that the graphics are not even good enough to allow a first time player to distinguish the enemy fleet from a group of islands.

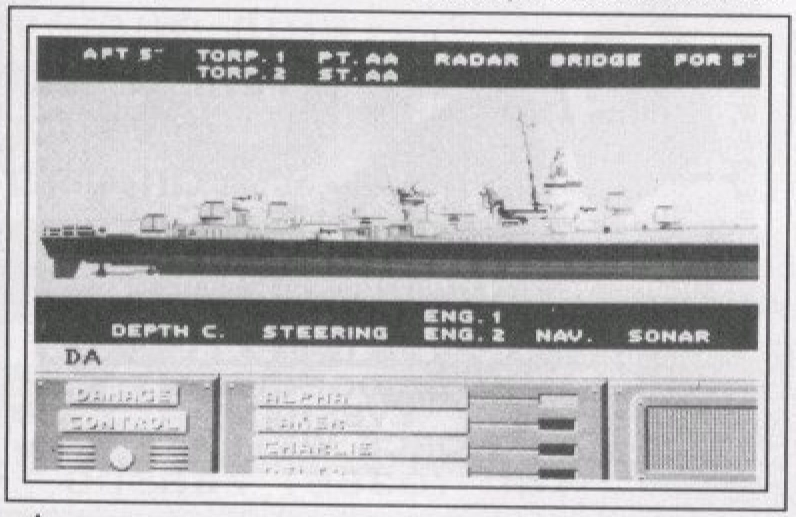
The graphics are average, but by no mean outstanding. The actual drawings lack detail, and the animation is, to put it very mildly, pretty poor. The sound isn't any better. The most dramatic moment sonically is when the guns go off, but even that is hardly likely to wake even the lightest sleeper, let alone put the fear of god into the enemy.

Overall, *Destroyer* looks like, plays like, and sounds like a Commodore 64 game. Unfortunately at £24.95 on the Amiga it is priced very differently. When you look at some of the games available for the Amiga, the time must have come when software houses stop looking at converting their 8-bit catalogue to the Amiga, and instead start to develop games that use the Amiga's bewildering array of facilities.

Ian J. Frogsac

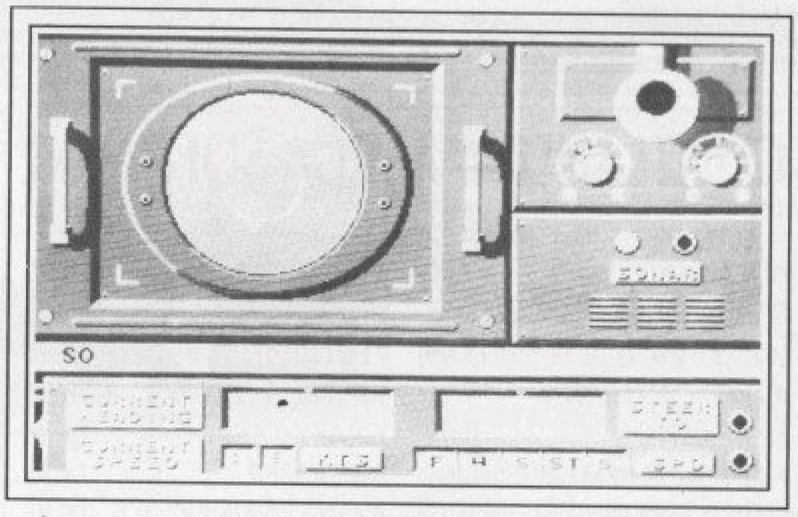


Enemy ship ahoy! Or is it an island?

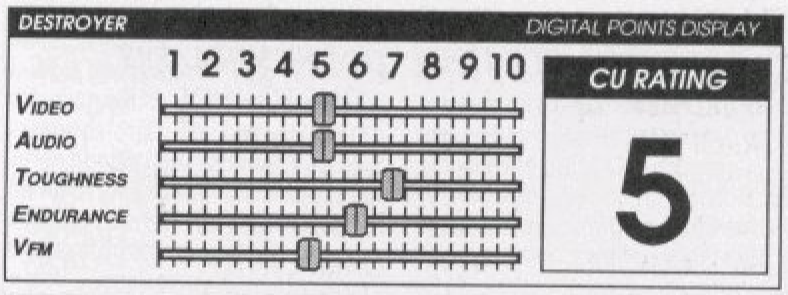


Damage control says . . . Ally systems are present!

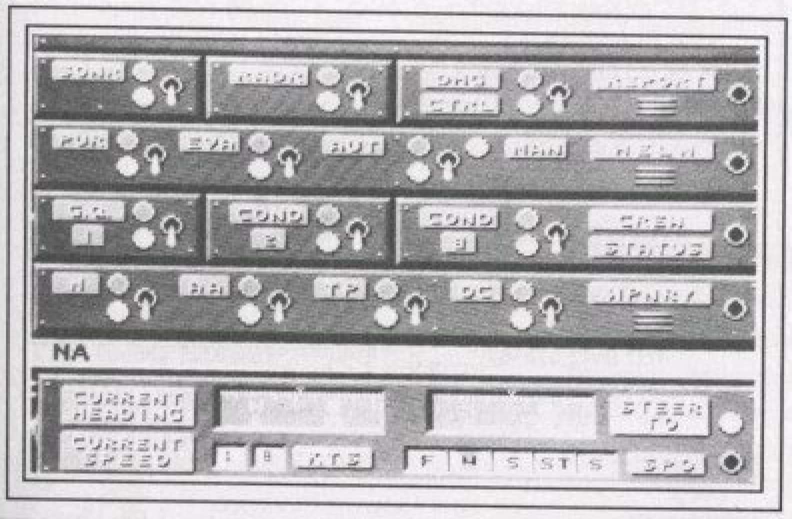
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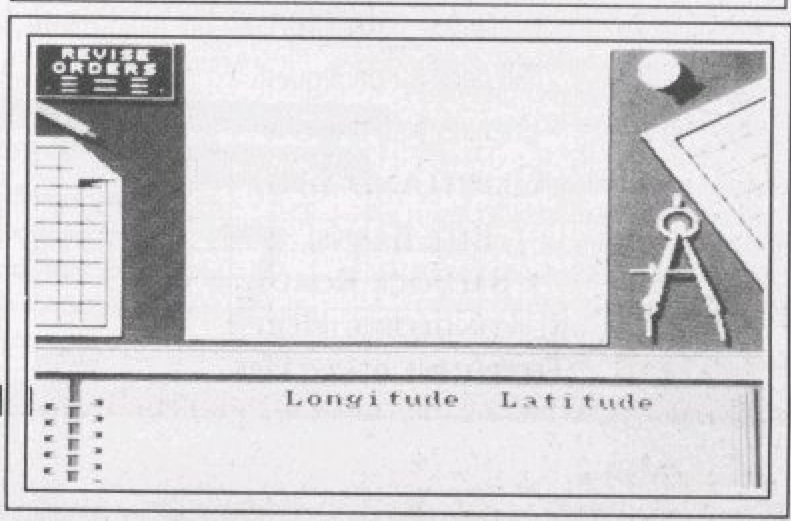


Erm . . . Blip! Blip! Blip! (Nick Kelly school of minimalist captions).



Some of the more mind-blowing graphics in Destroyer.





Amiga
Firebird
Price: £19.95

AMIGA

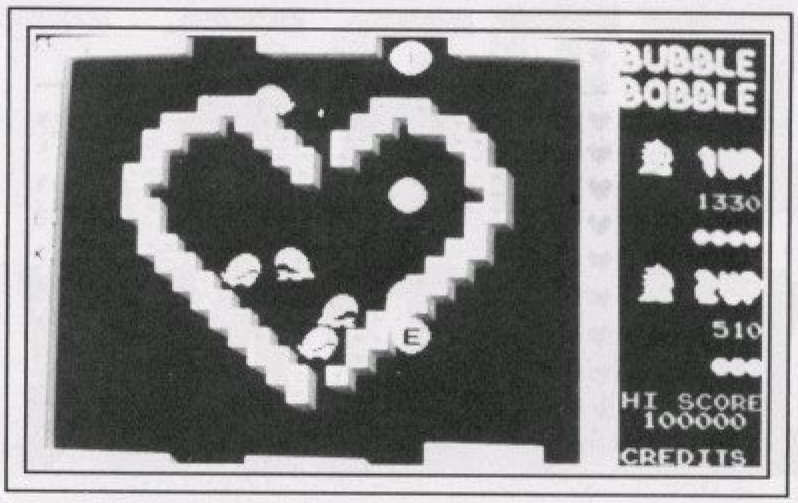
BUBBLE BOBBLE

Bub and Bob are two perfectly ordinary cute Brontosauri who, like most dinosaurs, have girlfriends. That was until they were kidnapped. Not standing for this, Bub and Bob set out to rescue their beloveds from the clutches of the evil letch.

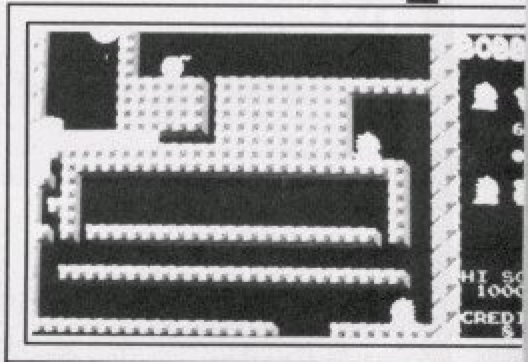
In order to rescue their women Bub and Bob have to make their way through a hundred varied caverns until at last they come upon the randy kidnapper. Both the little 'Thunder Beasts' can fend off attacks with the exceptional ability to blow high powered bubbles. If timed right the bubble will form around the target creature imprisoning it for a short time. To dispose of the creature(s) once and for all one of the Bronotsauri has to pop the bubble which will send the nasty spinning over until it finally comes to rest and turns into a bonus-giving piece of fruit. In keeping with the follow-on mode in the arcade version you get eight credits to follow on with — though when you use one of the credits the computer doesn't let you know.

You are attacked by some very weird things to say the least. Some are nothing more than standard ghosts, while others dressed in white cloaks make large boulders and roll them at you. Then on later levels you get creatures rather reminiscent of Zebedee from The Magic Roundabout.

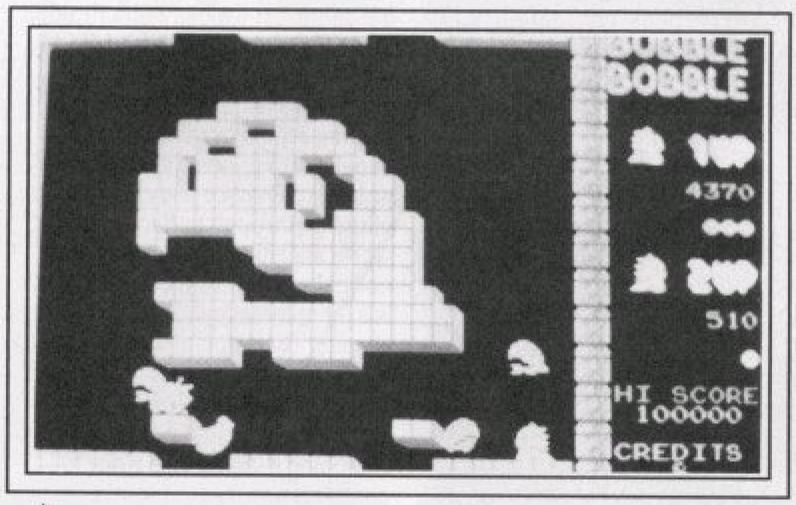
Bubble Bobble is absolutely jam packed with special features and little touches. For instance, collecting a potion will fill the top half of the screen with flowers or musical notes, the object being to collect as many as possible before the time expires. Doing this can give you a rather hefty bonus. If both players make it to level twenty without losing a life they are entitled to enter the diamond room, a fabulous room littered with gems which all add up to hundreds of thousands of points.



Love this game.



Not the top notch conversion it might have been.



Bub and Bob get fruity.

Collecting a cross can cause one of two things to happen, a blue cross will flood the cavern causing everything nasty to die, while an orange cross starts a lightning bolt sweeping across the screen killing all known baddies dead. An umbrella transports you to later levels and a bomb will 'smart' all the enemies. And that's just a selection.

Apart from the collectable objects there are the burstable ones. Bubbles float up from the ground containing lightning bolts, fireballs, water or letters. Bursting a lightning bubble sends a bolt flying out in one direction which will terminate all the creatures it hits. The fire bubbles when popped drop a little lump of flame to the ground which can cause a raging inferno. The water bubbles create a torrent of rushing water which sweeps away all in its path (including you). The letter bubbles appear randomly with the different letters — when all six are collected to spell the word EXTEND you get an extra life.

Of all the arcade conversions ever to be made on the Amiga I thought *Bubble Bobble* would be the best. For probably the first time in my life I was wrong. *Bubble Bobble* is a good conversion, but it stumbles in a few places. The two player mode is there and all the features, but the sound effects are only average. The tune is just a touch off the arcade original, and that touch just gives it a quality that starts to grate on the ear drums after a while. The graphics are almost exactly the same but when the going gets tough the screen gets busy, and when the screen gets busy the game slows down (slap on the back of the hand, Firebird).

In the arcade when you get all the letters to extend your life, a little guy appears on a separate screen with some large bubbles which he proceeds to burst. On the Amiga version you also get the screen but the brontosauri remain inanimate, and you have to wait a short while for the screen to boot. Also missing is the way the little figure of player two (or whoever is dead) comes on with a sign saying insert coin or press fire whenever there is one player.

BB is a competent conversion of a highly enjoyable arcade game and, apart from the aforementioned irritants, a very accurate one. An extremely playable game which will appeal to a variety of ages.

Mark Patterson

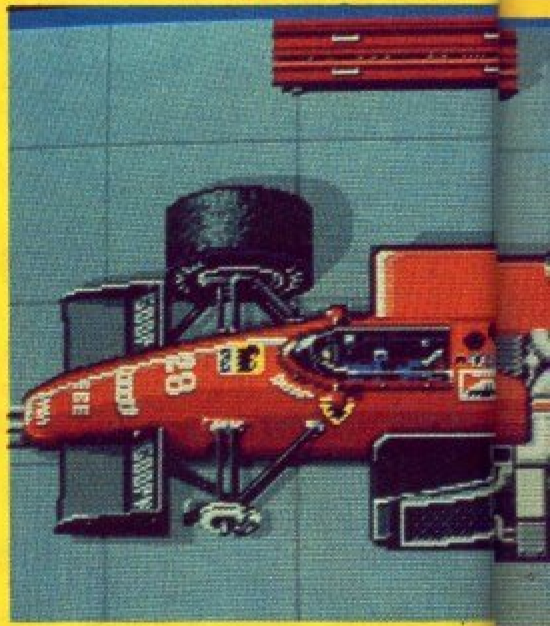
BUBBLE BOBBLE — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	7
Audio	7
Toughness	8
Endurance	7
Vfm	7

CU RATING

7

FERRARI FORMULA



This is the pits, man!

Amiga
Electronic
Price: £24.95

No name is more famous in the world of classic sports cars than Ferrari. The Italian constructors have produced a line of cars unparalleled in speed, design and handling and nowhere is this better exemplified than in the frontline of motor racing: Formula 1. This simulation gives you the opportunity to test, adapt, drive and compete for the laurels of the Formula 1 Championship in the car that has won more Grand Prix than that of any other constructor.

That sounds like a helluva lot to squeeze into a game but in true EA style they've succeeded to a great extent. *FF1* allows you to do all the things described above and more, like adapt the car in a wind tunnel, test the engine under labaratory conditions, work on it in the pits and in the garage at the test track in Fiorano, practice, qualify, warm up and race. What's best about it though, is that it allows you to get as involved as much or as little as you want. You don't have to spend hours working your way through a season painfully qualifying, practising and resetting the car's specifications if you don't want to. You can, as I found myself doing eventually, just compete in the various grand prix.

The game comes with a typically huge and detailed guide book to playing the game and this tells you all you need to know. It even tells you how to get at the wheel of your car. What it doesn't tell you as clearly is how to go straight into a race which, let's face it, everyone's going to want to do. Follow the Murray Pattenden way and you'll be on the starting grid in no time.

Firstly stop laughing at the pathetic title screen music — it isn't indicative of the quality of the rest of the game. Let the game run through to the Fiorano test track and elect to race by going to the race control tower. This takes you back to the loading screen but also puts up a panel with a pointer. Move the pointer to *Practice* and click it on the plus sign through to *Race*. It's also worth adjusting the distance. It's normally set on 18 kilometres which is a mere three or four laps of most circuits. There again most grand prix races are closer to 300 kilometres. If you went through it doing every stage as you should by my reckoning it would take a day to complete one race.

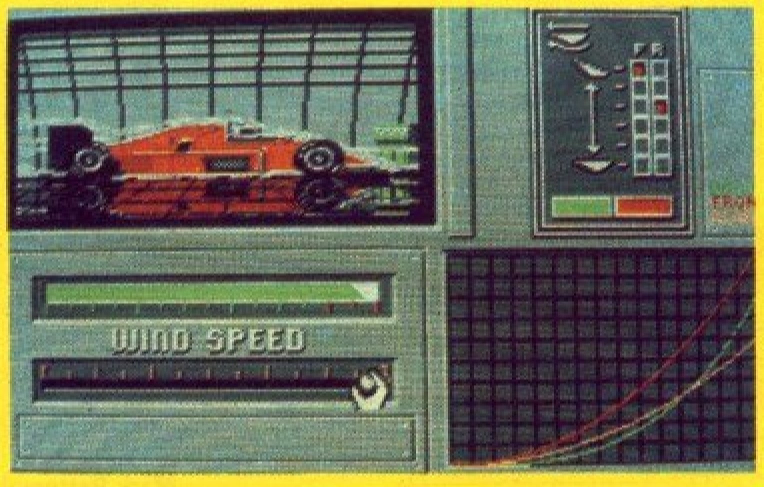
What's it like to race? Well once you're in the driver's seat it's not bad at all. The view you get is fairly accurately of the driver's own with the steering wheel and cockpit before you. If anything it's a bit high. The cockpit itself is full of the usual instruments but they're fairly difficult to read and most are only of use at more advanced levels where you have to do the gear changes for yourself. Everything else is controlled via the mouse, including steering, breaking and accelerating. And once you're moving round the tracks it feels pretty good.

Graphically, *FF1* is inconsistent. The still screens of detailed areas like the pits and the garage are excellent, whilst the more distant ones of the paddock and the test track are merely average. Out on the track the courses are varied and surprisingly detailed. Monaco for example is clearly on the coast, even if it doesn't have that 'street' feel to it. All tracks are painstakingly accurate. Imola, for example, has the acute Tosa bend where Nelson Piquet spun off last year at two hundred miles an hour. The car and those of your opponents leave a little more to be desired however. Whilst the rear view through your mirrors is effective the other cars lack detail and suffer from the trap most racing games fall into — perspective. From a short distance away they look absolutely huge. Also the results of a crash, like *Test Drive*, are disappointing — no balls

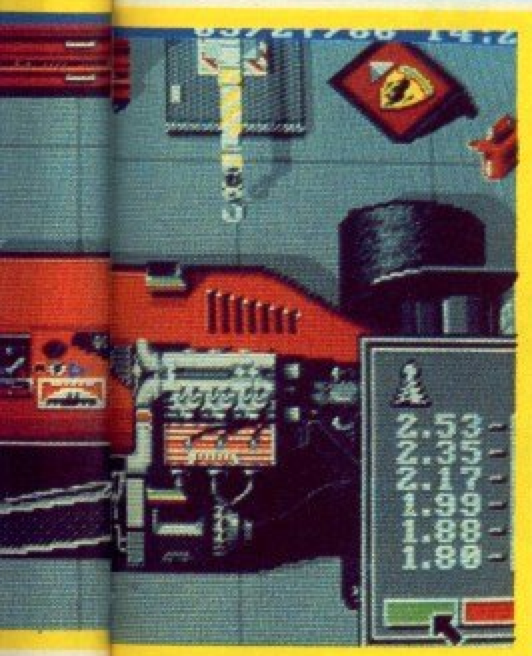
Another day, another circuit.

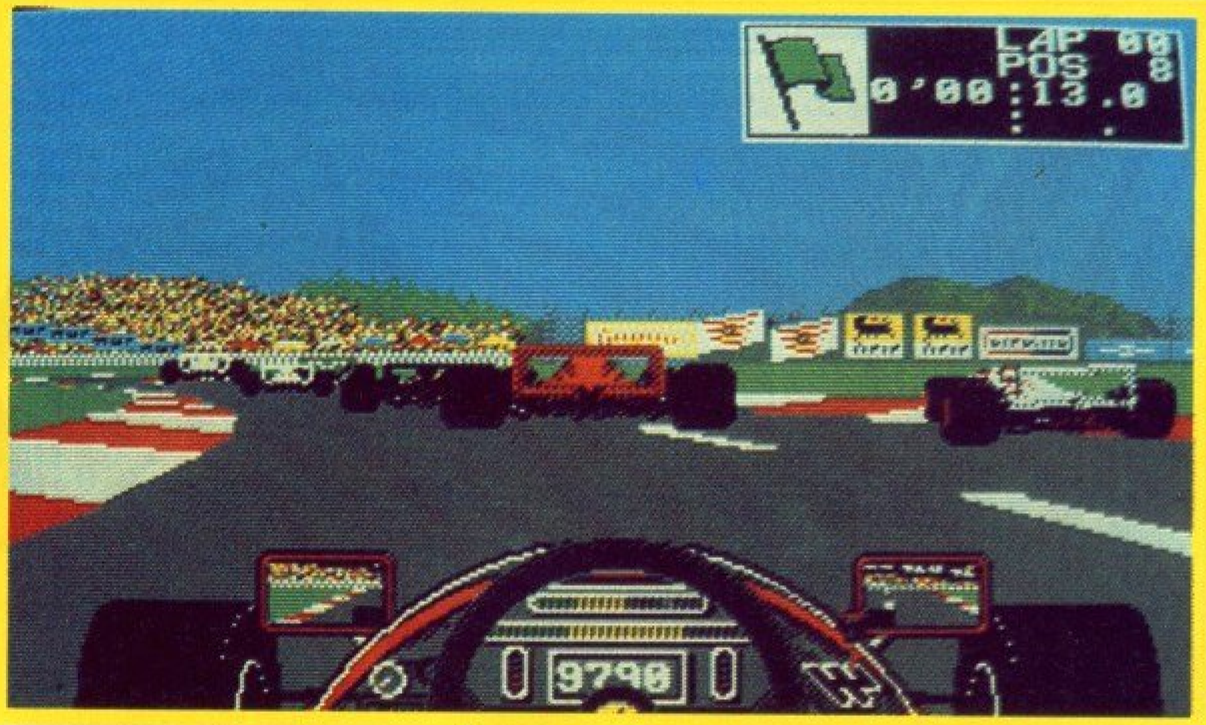


Ready to compete.









Ahead of the pack (well, nearly . . .)

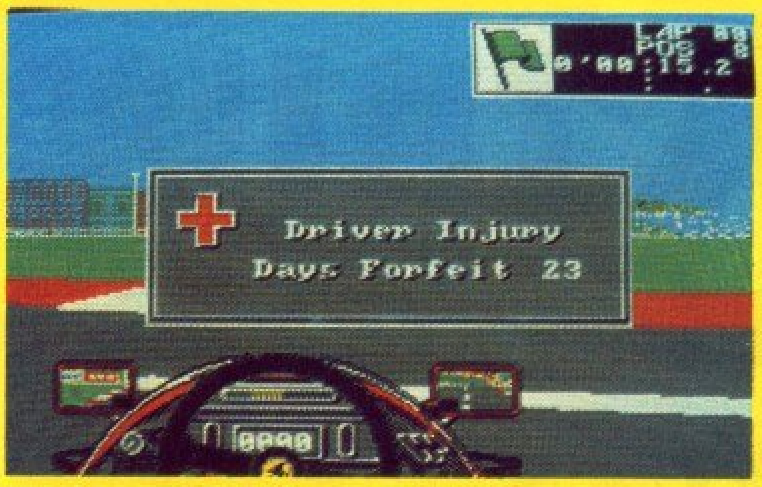
of flame or plumes of smoke. Don't programmers realise we're all a bit sick?

Sound is perhaps the game's biggest disappointment. There are a few good effects like the whizz of the pneumatic spanners but had EA gone and sampled some engine noises it would really have given the game an authentic feel.

Nevertheless *FF1* has more than any other racing game. The only thing that comes close is *Revs*, and this is a lot more fun and a lot less hassle to play. With the Brazilian grand prix already over, I reckon all you boy and girl racers are going to get into it in a big way.

Mike Pattenden

AMIGA



Ooops, you'll have to be more careful.



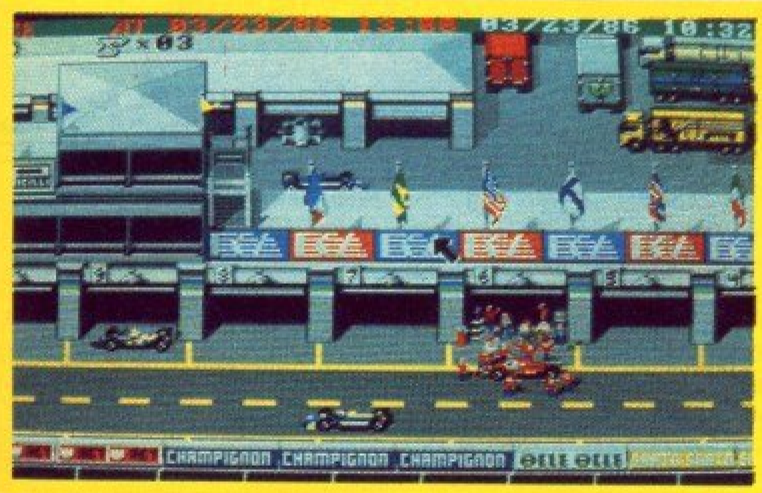
WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR THIS SEASON

Turbopower turned down so that turbo cars and normally aspirated ones stand a chance of being closer.
Riccardo Patrese second driver at Williams.
Williams cars no longer powered by Honda engines.
Nelson Piquet now driving for Camel Lotus.
Ferrari likely to continue their revival.
Boutsen and Fabi to challenge strongly in Benetton-Ford.



Tweak that engine.

The tunnel of wind (phnarr, phnarr — Ed).



GRAND PRIX FACTS

MOST CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIPS: Ferrari (8)
MOST GRAND PRIX WINS (DRIVER): Alain Prost (28)
MOST POLE POSITIONS: Jim Clark
MOST FAST LAPS: Jim Clark
MOST CHAMPIONSHIPS (DRIVER): Juan-Manuel Fangio

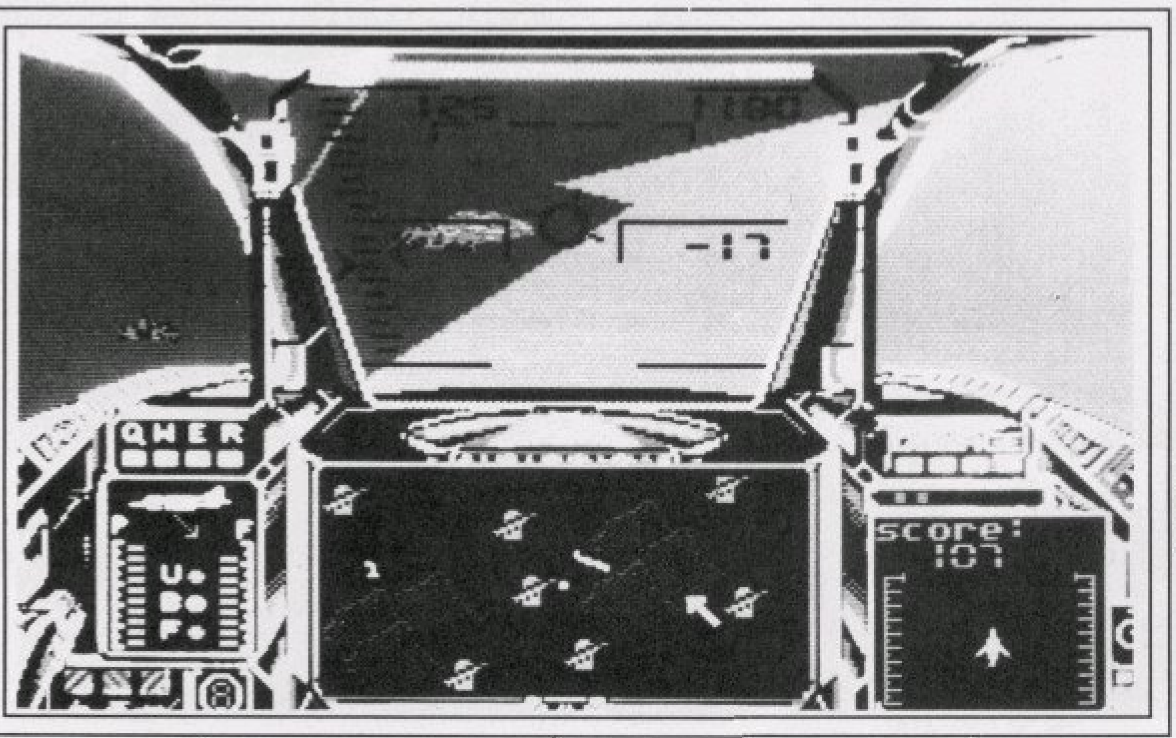
FERRARI FORMULA ONE — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

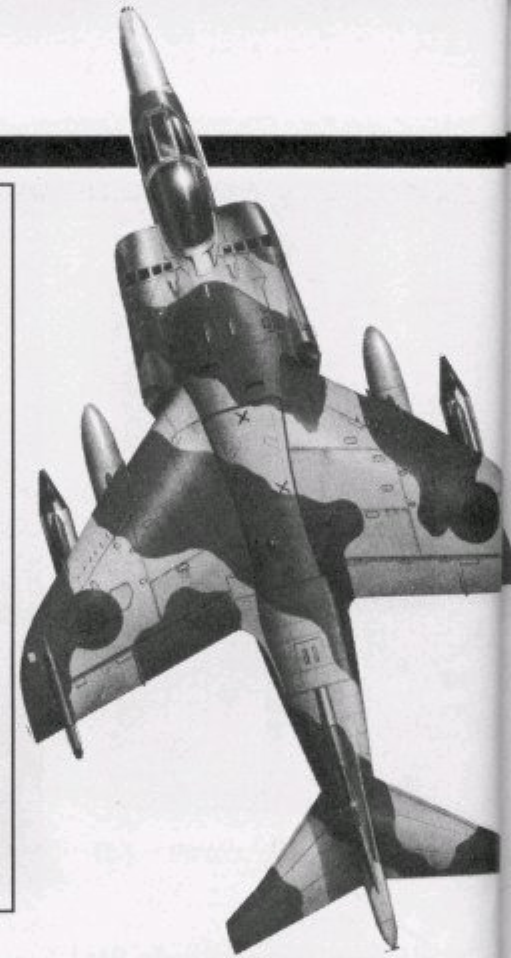
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

8





Approaching the coast at the speed of sound

STRIKE FORCE

With films like Top Gun continually publicising American fighters such as the F-14 Tomcat, and the F-16, I for one had almost forgotten that in the Harrier, the Brits have one of the world's best all-round fighter planes and the only one capable of vertical take-off and landing.

Strike Force Harrier puts the player in control of a Harrier, although the one in this game apparently has a few tricks up its sleeve that even the RAF have yet to manage to install in theirs!

As the version I reviewed only left the distribution company a matter of minutes before arriving in my grubby little mits, both the instruction book and the key guides were meant for the Atari ST, but after a few minutes scanning I was blasting bogeys at 20,000 feet with the best of them. By the way, while on the subject of the manual, I must say that although it explains most of the games vital areas, it does seem to have a bit of a gap when it comes to using the weaponry, but hopefully that will be included in the finished version.

What Mirrorsoft, or rather the programming team behind *SFH*, have managed to do that is so essential in this type of game is give the player enough to play with



SFH prepares for a sharp flypast.

immediately so he will want to delve further and discover the true depths of the game. You do not have to read the whole manual simply to spend five minutes hunting and destroying baddies, but if you spend a while with the game, looking at the smallish manual, you can find a whole lot more than a glorified shoot-'em up.

On the screen of the Amiga, *SFH* has a variety of on-screen information,. The top two-thirds of the screen is a full 'live-action' display of what is going on around you. Below that is the Friend or Foe Tracking Radar, or FORTRAC to its mates. This piece of equipment is completely vital if you are to achieve even relative success. It not only shows you where your base and those of the enemy are, it also serves to warn you as to the direction of on-coming missiles. You may not have a co-pilot in the game, but FORTRAC makes up for that (though he's not much fun in the pub after missions!).

Other parts of the screen act as an attack radar (more information on

your impending doom), a damage indicator, and the usual power/undercarriage/thrust indicators. Facts such as air speed, height, roll indicator and heading are all displayed in the centre of the screen, as are the targetting computers.

The targetting computers themselves are terribly clever little devils. When there is an enemy in your firing line, the outside of your circular aim turns red, and you can then fire your cannons. If you have any missiles left (and as you are only equipped with two to start with, you are lucky if you don't use them within the first ten seconds) a green cross-hair appears and indicates that you have locked on to an enemy and should launch one of these unerringly accurate missiles. Call me brutal, call me vicious, but I can tell you there is little in the world more satisfying than launching a missile that you KNOW isn't going to miss!

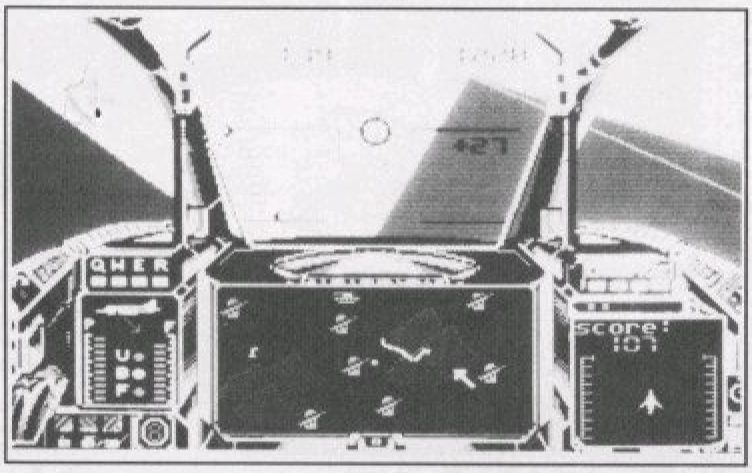
Bombs, of which you have three at the beginning of each sortie, are a great deal more difficult to use and require planning and great skill. Suffice it to say that in many hours play I hardly bombed anything

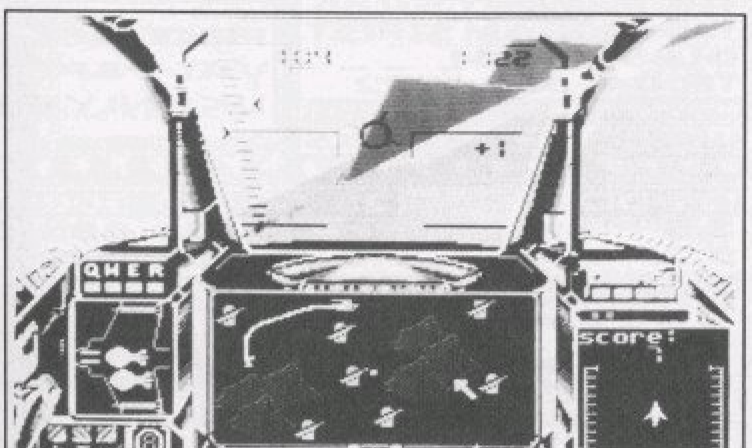


AMIGA

HARRIER

Amiga
Mirrorsoft
Price: £24.99





Watch out! Those pyramids are listed buildings.

successfully. I have been reliably informed that it is very simple, pah! Once you have decided on a target, you must launch your bombs at just the right moment, and then hope. What I want to know is why they can't have heat seeking bombs, that refuse to land until they've found an enemy base?

Of course you also have normal machine gun fire. Although not too useful against enemy planes, they are terribly good for flying low and blasting land-based enemies out of sight.

Unlike many flight sims I have seen, the graphics on *SFH* are actually pretty good. The enemy planes are distinctive, and the scrolling is smooth enough to do justice to the game. One very nice touch is the FORTRAC map/radar, which really is very pretty indeed. Sound too, is not bad: you hear satisfying screams as you release sidewinders, although the machine guns sound a little weedy. Some speech is included too, which shows that the game was not simply the ST conversion that some people said it would be.

AMIGA

Overall, then, it is safe to say that Mirrorsoft have released another cracker. It is refreshing to see that English companies are starting to release software that will have the Americans gushing over it the way we all gushed over *Defender of the Crown*.

Ian J. Frogsac

Strike Force Harrier — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	8
Audio	7
Toughness	8
Endurance	9
VFM	7

CU RATING

8

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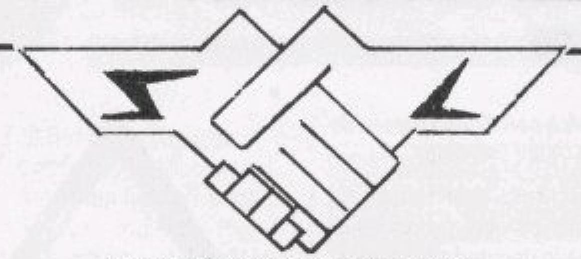
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SIDEWINDER

AMIGA

Amiga
Mastertronic
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Blast of the month, courtesy M'tronic.



Another 'homage to Braybrook' shoot 'em up.

Three quarters of the shoot 'em ups that have been released in the last year, owe a great deal of their ideas to Andrew Braybrook's *Uridium*. So does *SideWinder* but the programmers have obviously set out to use the Amiga's full potential. Excellent graphics, at last reaching the standards that the Amiga has been promising for years, a catchy theme tune that owes a great deal to Rob Hubbard, and some of the smoothest scrolling I have ever seen (especially when you consider the amount going on on-screen).

It is basically a four way scrolling blast (although the horizontal scrolling is limited and really for effect only). As you fly vertically up the screen, you can scroll the scenery about three inches left or right. Progression from wave to wave, however, is by completing a section vertically.

Once loaded, you are given the choice of five different playing levels, ranging from Beginner right through to Master. If, however, you decide to change level, there is no need to stop playing, you simply press F2 (pause) and reselect a level. This is particularly useful if you start on a simple level and begin to feel a little more adventurous.

To start with, your fighter is equipped with a twin cannon. Although relatively okay, to kill some of the enemy buildings you must hit them ten times. As you progress through the levels, you can, *Nemesis*-like, collect more and more powerful weapons, until eventually you can blast almost anything with a single shot. Unfortunately, these power packs only last 15 seconds.

When playing the game, the music no longer plays, and instead you hear some of the most impressive explosions ever. Turning the lights down and plugging the Amiga into a stereo while playing *SideWinder* is an experienced not to be missed!

If I had to make one criticism, it would be that the game does not have a high score table. But with a two player option, and arcade quality action, I can live without a high score table.

SideWinder is without doubt a bargain. It is better than *Xenon*— which must be slightly embarrassing for Mastertronic as they released both — and it costs less than half the price.

For once I am quite willing to stick my neck out. If you buy one game this month, buy this one. Miss this and you should be condemned to a life of playing play-by-mail games during a postal dispute!

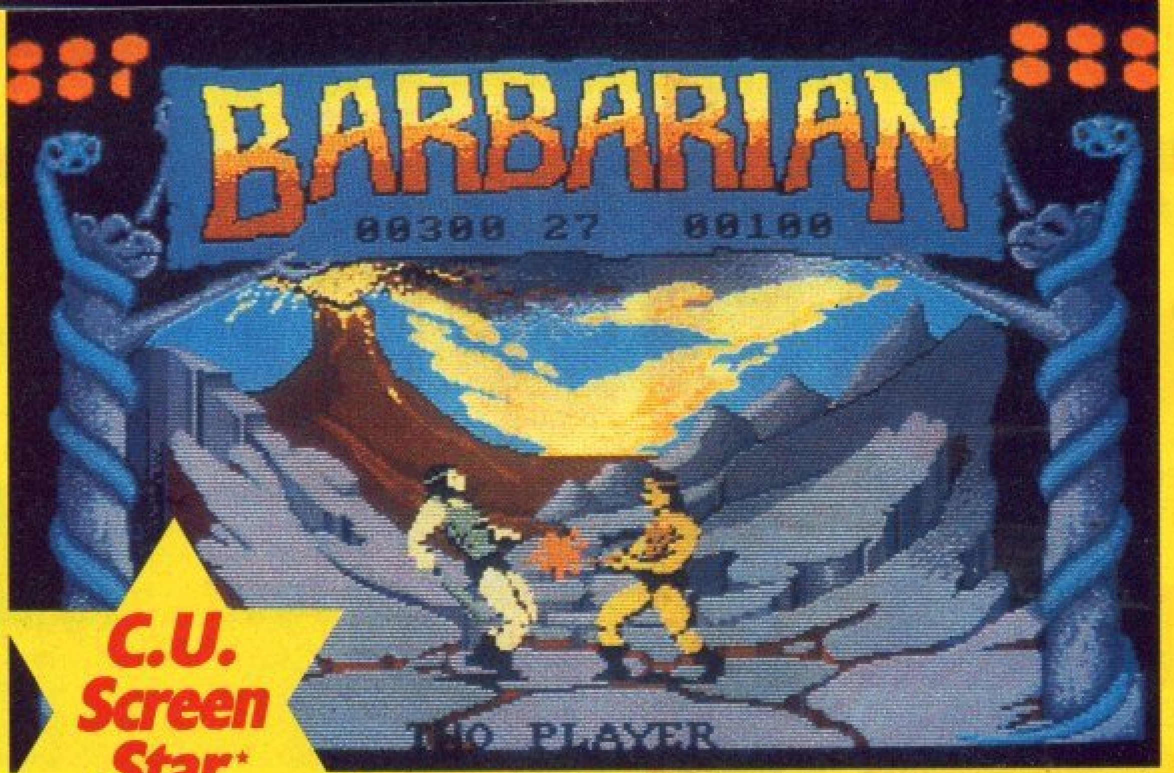
SIDEWINDER — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
VFM

CU RATING

8



C.U. Screen Star

Since *Barbarian* came into the office the air has been filled with grunts, groans, screams, and the sounds of metal against metal and metal against flesh. It's also turned a rather obvious shade of dark blue and the office gearbox is now bursting at the seams (mainly thanks to C&VG's adipose as manager, Garry Williams). Yes, everyone here at CU has got *Barbarian* fever. If we had a pick of the month, then this

Amiga
Palace
Price: £19.95

BARBARIAN

enhanced conversion of Palace's Commodore 64 classic hack 'n' chop 'n' beat 'em up would undoubtedly be 'the man for the job'.

What makes *Barbarian* on the Amiga is the excellent use of sampled sounds. 'Prepare to die!' announces the computer, before either one or two players fight it out in a duel to the death. Swords swish, and clash with a healthy 'clang'; the combatants grunt and roar in pain, and there's a gratifying 'crack' when you successfully execute a head-butt. Leave the joystick alone for a few seconds and the figher under your control turns to face you, shrugs his shoulders and says, in a somewhat uncharacteristically camp voice, "C'mon".

A well-timed blow to your opponent's neck removes his head, with a spurt of crimson (human) bean juice and an appropriately sickening slicing sound, followed by a stomach-churning squelch as the severed loaf hits the floor. As you raise your sword in triumph, a squat, deformed, green creature hobbles on screen and laughs menacingly at the decapitated warrior's misfortune, before kicking the head off screen and dragging the corpse off to ye local pie shoppe.

All this nail-biting action takes place against one of four attractive backdrops: a forest scene, followed by a valley, then inside Drax's Castle. Who's Drax you may well ask? Well, he's an evil sorcerer who's holding Princess Maria (played by Ms Whittaker) — erm, holding her, um, hostage. So if you don't fancy a little man to man with a friend you can always fight against the increasingly ferocious computer-controlled opponents in an attempt to rescue the comely, buxom wench.

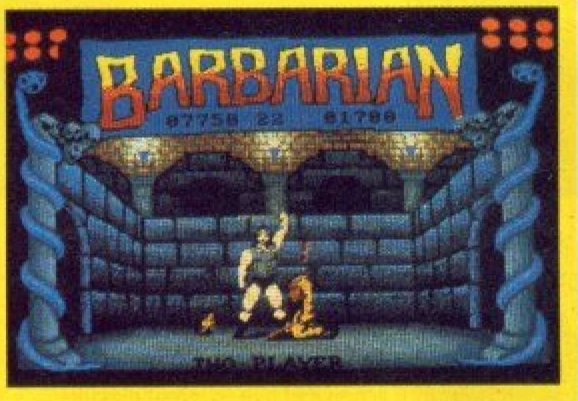
There are sixteen macho moves available, ranging from a kick to straightforward cuts and slashes, and the well-crucial Web of Death — a dazzling display of swordplay which involves whirling your weapon around in front of you in a very cocky manner. Guaranteed to impress the girls, this one.

Barbarian on the 64 was great; this 16-bit incarnation is even better. It's graphically superior, a lot faster and smoother, and the use of sampled sound effects ice a beautifully prepared cake. One of the collection, methinks.

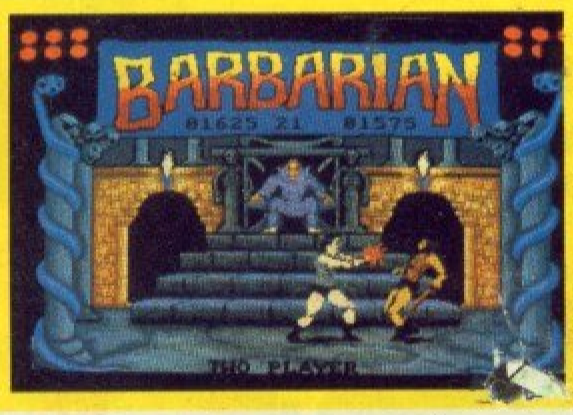
Gangway, boys. I want to give Williams another thrashing . . .

Gary Penn

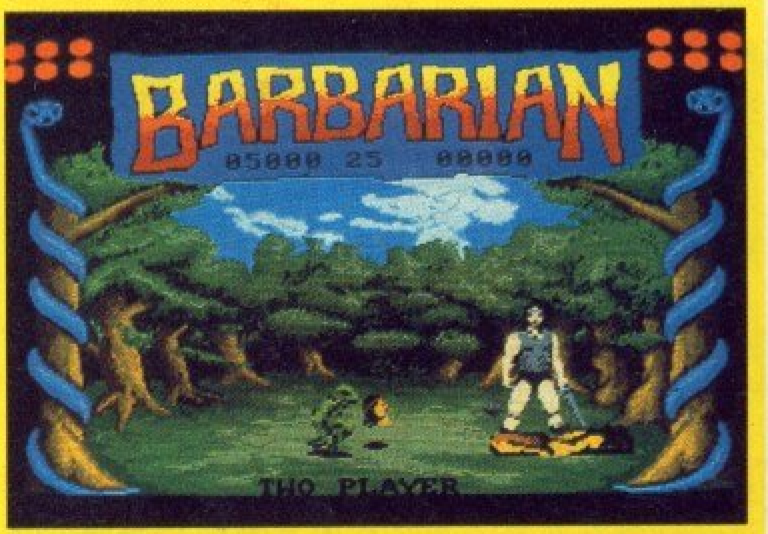
Off with his head . . .



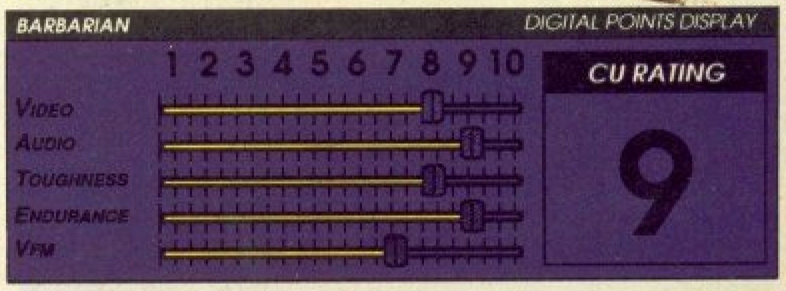
Swish, slash — EOOW!



The hoblin' goblin only does it for kicks. . .



AMIGA



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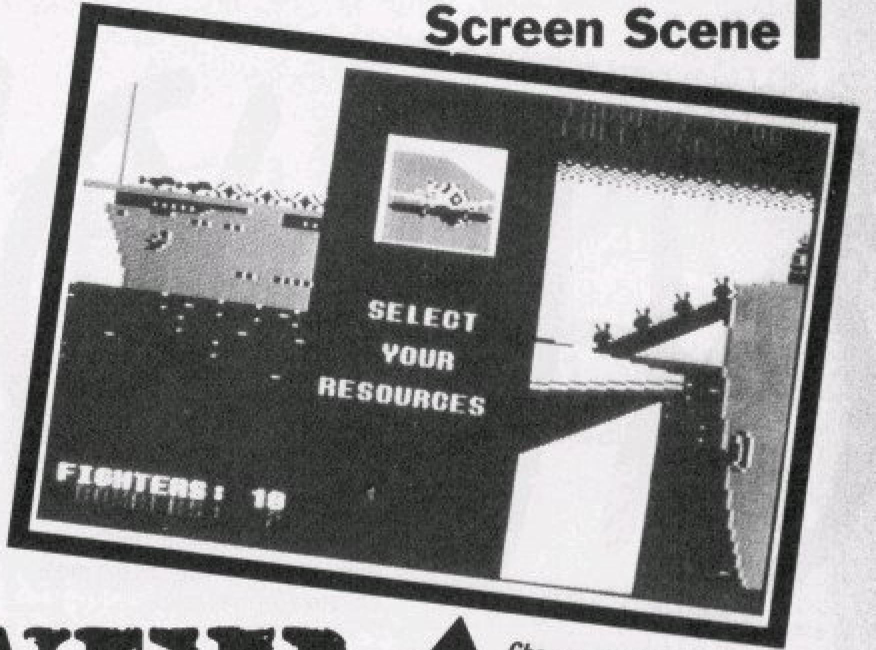
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64/128
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Power At Sea puts you in charge of American naval forces. Your task is to capture the four Japanese bases in the Leyte Gulf.

You start the game by selecting the number of fighter and bomber planes allocated to your aircraft carrier, and the number of troops and amount of fuel for the convoy. You'll find out what the best combinations are during the mission.

The main screen depicts the bridge of the command ship with the back of the commander's head plumb in the middle. In front of him sit the four major officers; communications, navigation, damage and weapons operations. Using the joystick you can move the commander's head to face any one of the four officers to get them to perform a function. If a particular officers needs the commander's attention, you'll hear a peeping sound and the officer's head will turn round.

So the radio man gives messages from HQ, warns of enemy sightings and attacks and tells the commander when a destination is reached.

Next man along is navigation, who plots the ship convoy's course on a map of the Gulf. Plotting a course is done by moving a crosshair with your joystick. The trick here is to work out the shortest distance between enemy bases to conserve fuel. Having plotted the course you choose the speed. For long distances you can turn on 'time compression'.

Next man along is the damages bloke. Here you get a picture of the ship with damage indicated both graphically and in text. With only 96 hours to complete the mission you can't afford to limp around.

Last is the weapons operations man who controls the planes, guns and landing forces. He also indicates which force is best suited to an action. When you spot an enemy destroyer, you send in the fighter planes to soften it up and then you bomb it. Kamikaze-planes get the ack-ack treatment from your anti-aircraft guns. When you reach land, your long-range guns pound enemy coastal installations in preparation for the landing of the assault troops. Most of the action takes place as a sequence of pictures, like film stills.

Still, you do get to fly the planes. But what you get is a cut-price flight sim view of your cockpit and only one attempt to bash the destroyer per plane. Same goes for the guns. You can move them up and down, side to side *Beach-Head* style and fire — that's it. It's all very boring because there's no real feeling of accuracy.

The biggest bummer of all is that you don't get to take part in the final land assault. That's done as a series of pictures too. Little bits of text appear on the screen, "we need reinforcements", and you simply sit back and wait for the result.

If you manage to capture all four bases, or you're too damaged to carry on, you're sent back to base and given a score ranging from commander to mop boy.

Graphics were very good and there is lots of attention to minute detail. Sound is good too, although not overpowering.

Power at Sea is a well thought out and constructed game but it falls down very badly on the action sequences. And since the strategy stuff isn't all that taxing for the brain, it should have been better.

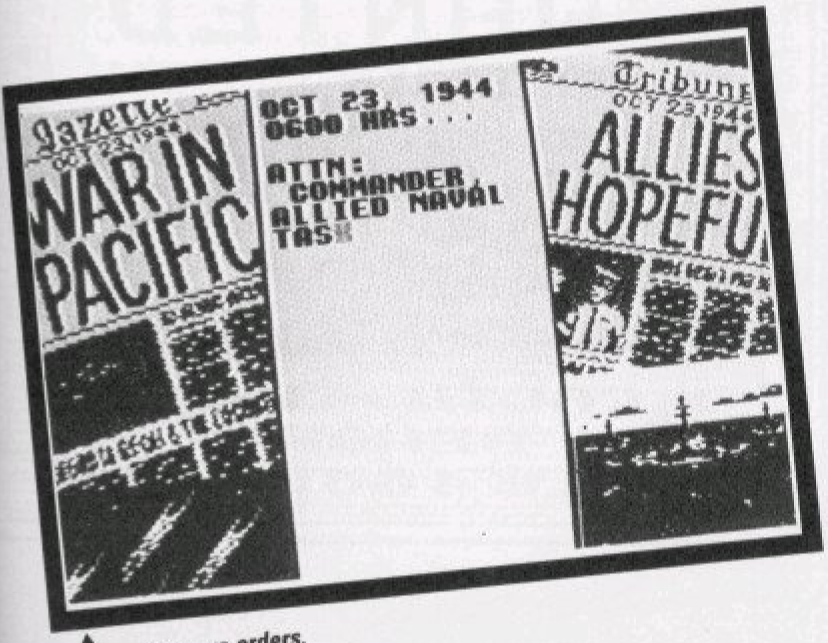
Bohdan Buciak

POWER AT SEA — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

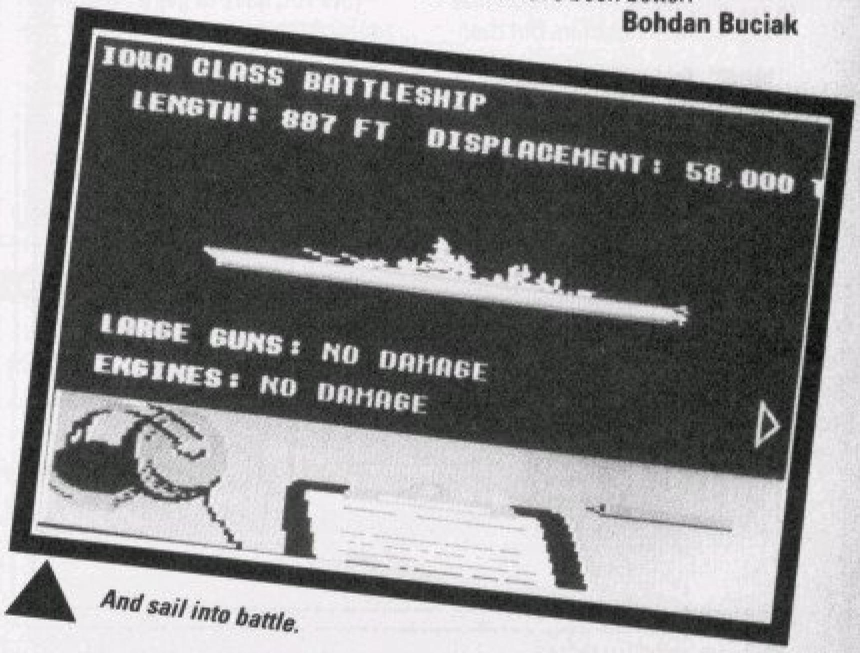
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING
6

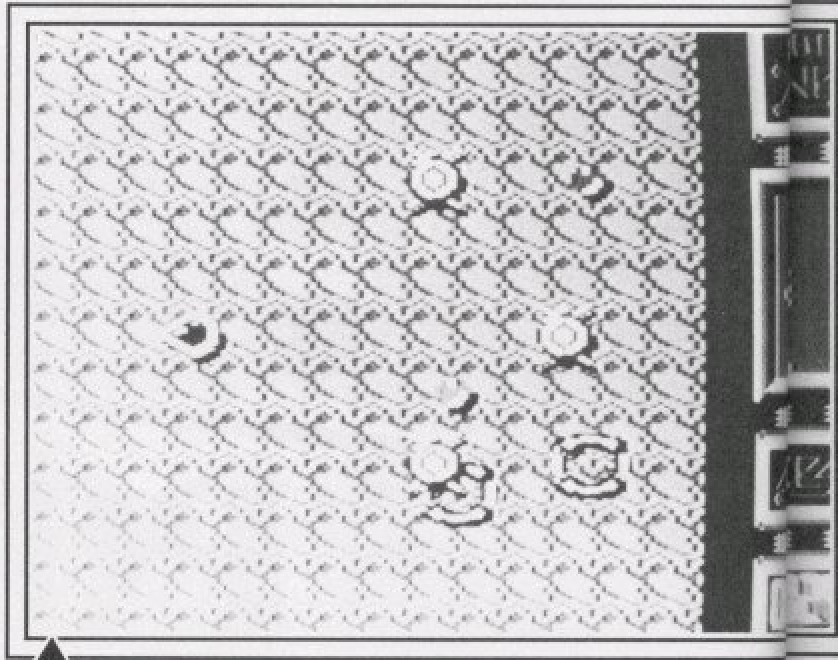


Get your orders.



And sail into battle.

OH NO!



▲ **Oh no! . . . *not very ox-citing.***

64/128
Silverbird
Price: £1.99

It is the year one million and gold and diamonds are no longer the most precious substances. These days the ideal gift for a girl is an ox. Ox as in incredibly dim animal, bovine creatures being even more valuable than loads of money. It's your job to protect a herd of these animals, since rustling has replaced doing securicor vans as the most lucrative form of crime.

The rustlers come in a variety of craft, some of which multiply, others just make a nuisance of themselves. And then there are the cow snatchers. These lower themselves gently over your bovine flock and whisk them off the side of the screen.

Your valiant efforts at playing nanny are aided by your craft, the latest nu-wave herd mobile. Not only is it equipped with forward firing lasers but also a sort of boomerang with a tracking device which is blasted from the back of your craft. However, it's not easy to control. To manoeuvre you have to twiddle the joystick to rotate your craft into the right direction, then accelerate by holding the joystick in that position.

Your craft never stops in this game. A gravitational force pulls from all sides of the playing area (roughly a two by two screen grid) throwing you about a lot.

The game is split up into nine planets each with ten zones, which gives quite a large playing area, but

TRIAN ROBBERS

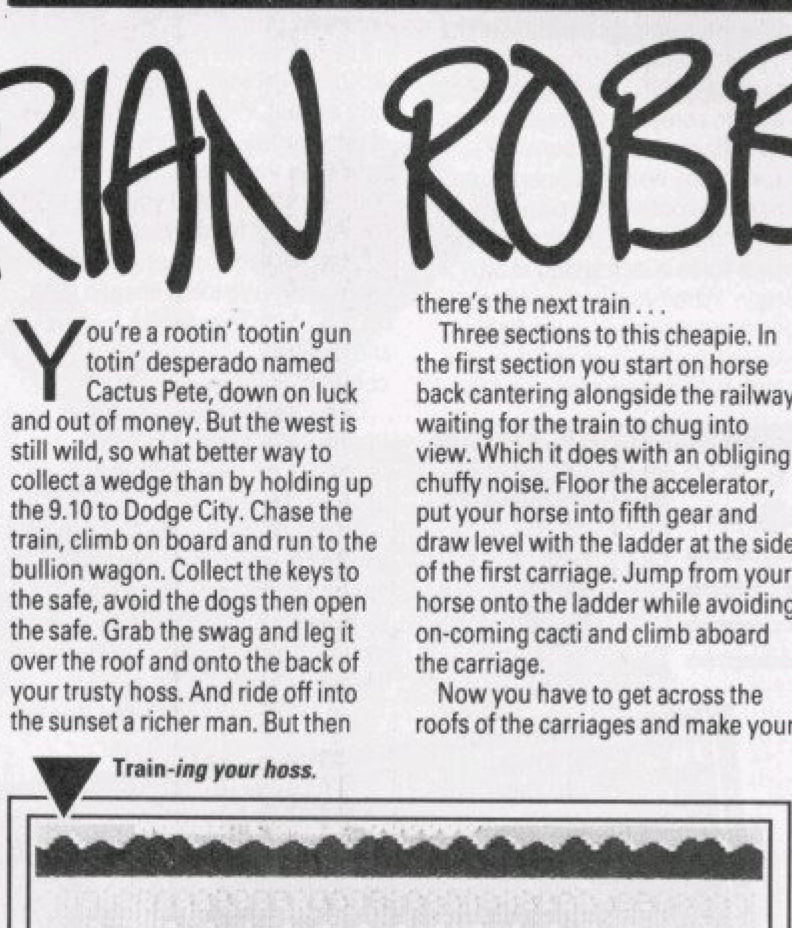
64/128
Silverbird
Price: £1.99

You're a rootin' tootin' gun totin' desperado named Cactus Pete, down on luck and out of money. But the west is still wild, so what better way to collect a wedge than by holding up the 9.10 to Dodge City. Chase the train, climb on board and run to the bullion wagon. Collect the keys to the safe, avoid the dogs then open the safe. Grab the swag and leg it over the roof and onto the back of your trusty hoss. And ride off into the sunset a richer man. But then there's the next train . . .

Three sections to this cheapie. In the first section you start on horse back cantering alongside the railway waiting for the train to chug into view. Which it does with an obliging chuffy noise. Floor the accelerator, put your horse into fifth gear and draw level with the ladder at the side of the first carriage. Jump from your horse onto the ladder while avoiding on-coming cacti and climb aboard the carriage.

Now you have to get across the roofs of the carriages and make your way along to the bullion coach at the end of the train. The only hazards here are mistimed jumps and tunnels. When a tunnel does loom up you have to press fire to duck, then comes an incredibly uninteresting jaunt through total darkness where only your eyes are visible. When you make it to the end car you have to enter it through the hatch in the roof. This takes you on to section two in which you have to run rings around guard dogs, grab safe keys, open the safe by bumping into it and get out again in one piece. Then all that remains is for you to scarper back along the top of the train onto the getaway horse and spend the rest of your life in relative luxury on a beach in Jamaica.

▼ **Train-*ing your hoss.***



▼ ***Git yer name up in lights.***



Oh No! is not so hard that you can't get far. In fact, shortly after mastering the basic control of your ship it becomes fairly easy.

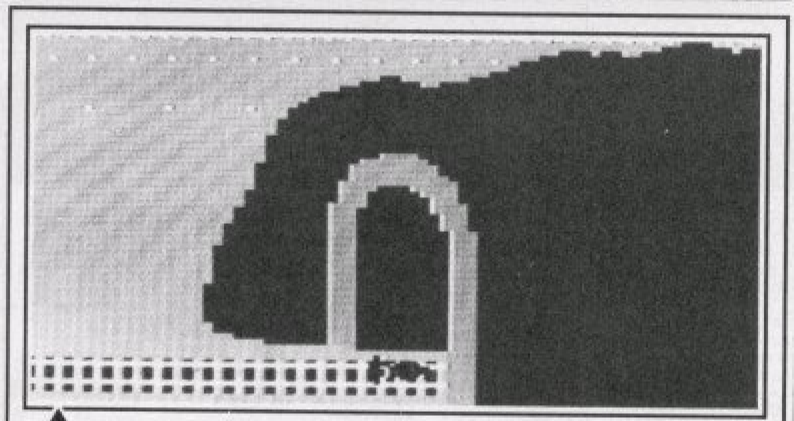
If you found yourself losing more of your herd than you bargained for, never fear. It is easier to look after one or two rather then ten. And if you shoot one of the special aliens it will leave you behind a special package of an extra cow.

Oh No! falls into the class of shoot 'em up but it is a very nippy little game and it merits playing. The scrolling is very nice, a bit like a scaled down *Paradroid*. The graphics, though well defined, are below average, but with the scrolling and the action this is hardly noticable. The sonics are pretty good with zip zap noises and a very nice jingly title screen ditty.

Oh No! cannot compete with some of the high quality budget titles and releases around on the market at the moment. It just qualifies for the above average category, and in fact started to drag its heels after a while with the same things being repeated over a variety of sometimes garishly coloured backdrops. Not very appealling for the price and a disappointment for what is the first in the Sensible Silver range of games programmed by Chris Yates and Jonathan Hare of *Seuck* and *Wizball* fame.

Mark Patterson

Oh No! — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10)	
Video	5
Audio	5
Toughness	6
Endurance	4
VFM	6
CU RATING	**5**



Blood on the tracks.

Train Robbers gave me a taste of what the old budget titles were like. The graphics are well handled but ill-defined, with the main character and horse looking like pieces from Lego's classic collection. The train moves very fast and looks quite good as well. One of the nicest effects is when Cactus Pete hits a bridge at fifty miles an hour. He becomes stuck to the arch of the bridge as the train rushes by beneath him, and then in a true cartoon style plummets to his death.

The sound is a combination of bizarre noises coupled with the puff-puff of the train. Nothing special there. I did have a small problem controlling Pete on top of the train, because the bridges come so fast and joystick control is a bit finiky. I found it hard to dismiss *Train Robbers* as a naffo game, but the lack of things to do weigh heavily against it. Really you'd be well advised to put your money towards something more appealing.

Mark Patterson

TRAIN ROBBERS — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10)	
Video	5
Audio	4
Toughness	5
Endurance	6
VFM	6
CU RATING	**5**

THE KRYPTON FACTOR

64/128
TV Games
Price: £7.95/cass

How the hell do you turn The Krypton Factor into a computer game? I mean, just how do you include such classic rounds as the Minnesota dexterity test? Well obviously TV Games thought the same thing — and then came up with the answer. Easy. They left it out.

There are six rounds and they all load separately — because the game is "too long", to quote the manufacturers.

You begin by selecting a digitised picture of a competitor, such as a guy called Mike who's a bank manager in Sutton. With a face selected you go into the first round of the *KF* which, everybody knows is the Mental Agility. A series of numbers flash up at random and you have to type them back in numerical order. No problems there, except there's a time limit and if you make a mistake typing them, it's tough toenail.

From there it's onto the Observation Round. A still screen appears and a trail of text scrolls across the screen full of obvious details like colours and times. When it's all over you do it again, watching this time for the changes. Entering them correctly, again with a time limit which is beyond me. Irritating.

The one section that might have been well represented in *KF* is the assault course. We've all seen *Combat School* so we know it can be done. However TV Games give you a top down view of a figure who just seems to run over a lot of obstacles as if they were drawn on the ground. You're supposed to press a few keys to give you extra strength in arms and leg and extra stamina where its needed. A travesty.

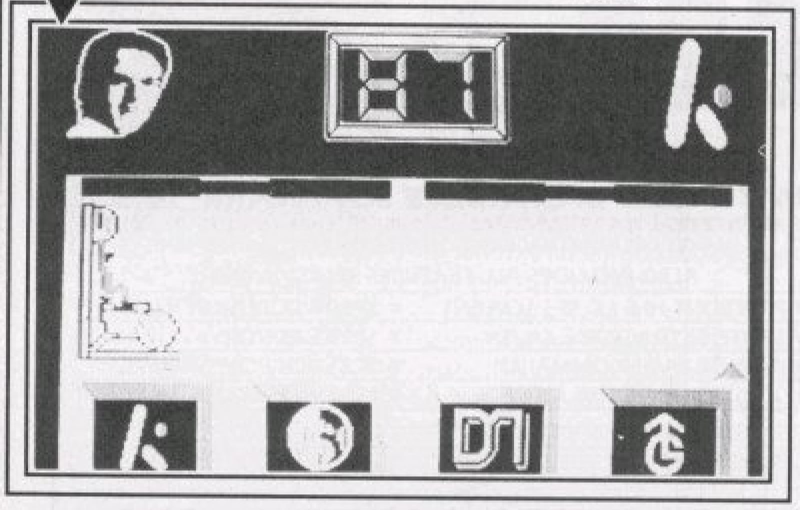
Next we have the Intelligence Round, the one everybody sits back for. I mean how do they do reconstruct those tortuous puzzles? The computer version is much easier, but by the time you've actually fiddled with the keys and put a few squares together it's time's up.

Finally it's General Knowledge and this is represented in the time-honoured home computer fashion of scrolling questions and then the answer. Did you get it right?, the computer asks. Of course I did...

The KF is a waste of time. An idea for a TV game licence that should have been ditched. What next? *Busman's Holiday*?

Mike Pattenden

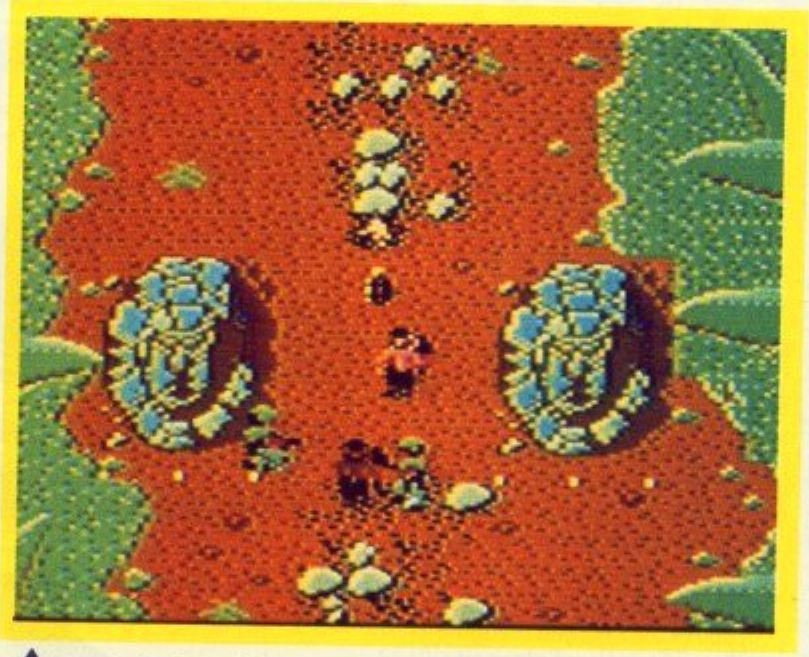
You've got 30 seconds to decipher this screenshot...



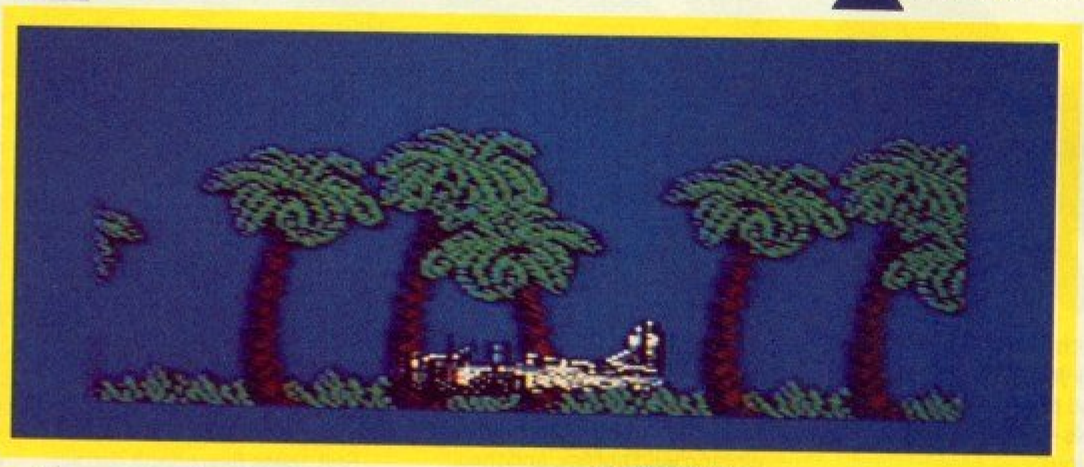
KRYPTON FACTOR — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10)	
Video	2
Audio	1
Toughness	8
Endurance	2
VFM	2
CU RATING	**2**



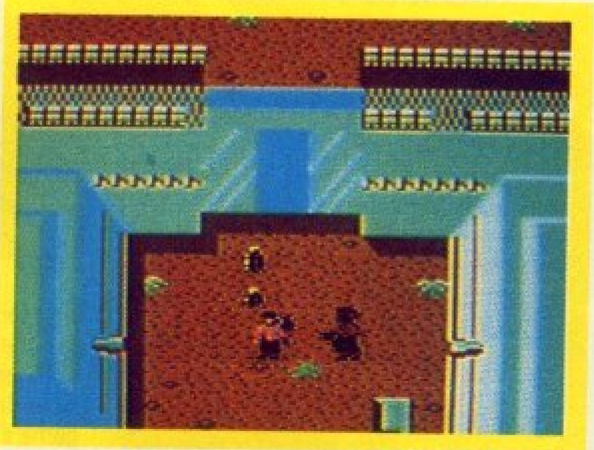
Vince and Paul find their path blocked . . .



. . . but bullet spitting rocks are no problem.



Crash landing into the jungle.



Quick Vince! Blow the gates . . .

IKARI WARRIORS



64/128 Elite Price: £9.95/cass £12.95 disk

I was half heartedly expecting a busty, semi-naked blond to burst out of Elite's shiny presentation box, wrap her arms around me and plant a multitude of sensuous smackers about my person before exclaiming 'April Fool!' But no such luck. Inside there really was a disk bearing the words *Ikari Warriors*, and — surprisingly — it wasn't blank.

Yes, after 18 or so months of delays, hype, excuses and the like, Elite have released the long and eagerly awaited 64 conversion of SNK's cult coin-op. So was it worth the wait? Weeeell . . .

Ikari Warriors is basically a glorified version of Capcom's *Commando*, albeit with an important difference: you can have two players fighting together on-screen at the same time. It has spawned many clones, amongst them two graphically different but otherwise virtually identical sequels from SNK — *Victory Road* and *Guerilla Wars*. (Incidentally, Imagine's conversion of the former has been delayed somewhat. Funnily enough, Imagine's conversion of SNK's *Tank* was continually delayed and has yet to appear . . . It looks like Elite have a first on their hands: the first ever SNK conversion to be released on the 64.

As the scenario would have it, crack commandos Paul and Vince (*they sound pretty evil — Ed*) are on a mission — to rescue General Alexander Bonn, currently in the hands of a band of raucous revolutionaries. This task involves negotiating roughly 75 screens' worth of horizontally scrolling landscape, infested with enemy soldiers, helicopters, tanks, gun emplacements and even more enemy soldiers.

Bullets and grenades are in short supply, although extra supplies can be acquired along the way, along with special features, such as long range firing, faster firing, high explosive grenades, and a smart bomb which destroys all enemy soldiers on screen. But that's not all . . . dotted about the landscape are unmanned tanks, just waiting for you to get inside them and dish out a hefty dose of death to anyone foolish enough to get in the way. But all good things have to come to an end — and you can't drive the tank forever. An accurate hit with a grenade sets the tank alight, and if you don't bale out quick then you're dead meat.

It must be said, the coin-op was nothing special. Its popularity was more down to, what was at the time, the fairly unique simultaneous two player action, as opposed to any dazzling gameplay elements. I found this conversion just as playable for the same reason. It's considerably more difficult, especially as you can shoot your partner, but even so it's all good old fashioned shoot 'em up fun and frolics throughout.

The graphics and sound are unimpressive — more so the former, as the title screen credits four people as being responsible. Apparently it took Elite a year to do them which is a waste. Had they been better then it might have pushed this into the screen star category.

Gary Penn

IKARI WARRIORS — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

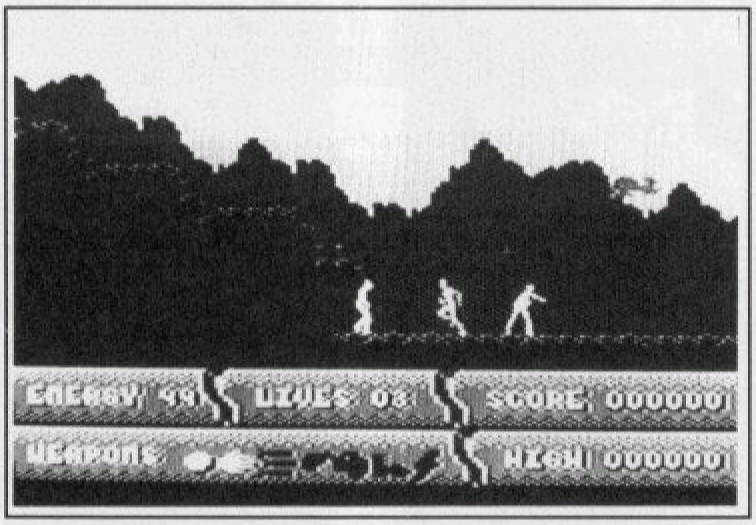
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING **8**

Time Fighter

64/128
CRL
Price:
£1.95/cass
£14.95/disk



▲ *Start in prehistoric times with a few rocks . . .*

Games which feature time travelling warriors are usually nothing more than lame excuses for chucking together a few totally dissimilar and threadbare arcade scenarios, like commando combat followed by jet-pack shoot 'em up. The result is like a compilation of second-rate games which couldn't make it on their own.

CRL's *Time Fighter* is thankfully a cut above the rest, and though it grafts wild west gunfights and subway mugging, medieval archery and space-age lasers, it does it all with a certain amount of style, and — just about — gets away with it.

This has nothing to do with the preposterous drivel on the back of the package, which does its best to stop you from buying it, and everything to do with some crafty animated and challenging joystick control.

Your character is a diminutive athlete who actually moves like a human being rather than the ill-proportioned, jerky dwarves which inhabit most games software. He runs, leaps and climbs, throws stones and grenades, fires guns and arrows, and even dies with a fluid realism which is remarkable.

His movements and weapons alter for each new time period, and that means you have to develop new skills as you progress through the seven levels — another point in the game's favour.

So, in the prehistoric level one, survival comes down to killing stone-age men, pterodactyls and dinosaurs with some well-aimed rocks. But by the time you've got the hang of that, you've reached the middle ages and you have to master the bow and arrow. Not difficult, but not fast either, so you have to allow for the time it takes to draw your bow before you fire.

In the Wild West you're gunning down indians and bandits, and shinning up totem poles to avoid galloping wild horses, and then you're transported to prohibited Chicago. Things start getting sweaty now, as you dodge a hail of lead and attempt to pick off the gangsters at the windows, sidestepping the occasional police car. And you've still got WWII, the New York subways and an orbital space station to fight your way through — though the last is a bit of an anti-climax, being easily the most derivative of the bunch.

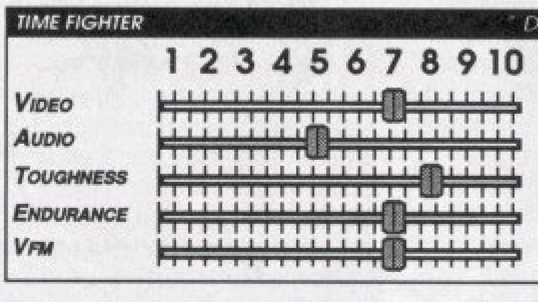
The animated action is, however, often let down by the background graphics. While some of the scenery is reasonably detailed, especially the indian camp and the castle battlements, at other times it's pretty ropey, and the prehistoric and trench sequences are exceptionally dull. Sound effects are limited to belches and farts which don't vary much from level to level, plus the odd special effect (horses, sirens, motorbikes).

It's a shame, too, that the other animated characters are all identical to your own, only in a different colour. It would have been a darn sight more atmospheric if the hordes of knights, indians soldiers and thugs had bothered to dress up for the party. . .

Still, these flaws don't detract overmuch, and the game is sufficiently challenging to compensate. For wimps CRL has provided a practice/cheat mode (hit the space bar) which allows you to battle through all seven levels with infinite lives but no score.

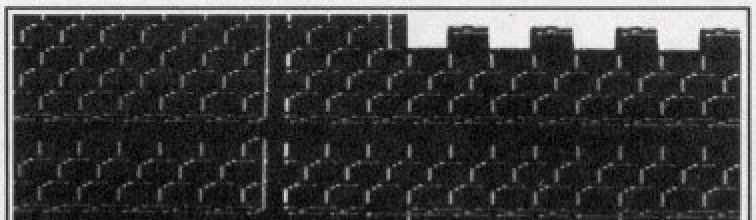
Altogether *Time Fighter* is an interesting addition to a well-worn format. Rumour has it that the programming team has subsequently developed a system which doubles the size of the sprites without great memory loss. Perhaps next time they'll also come up with a more original format in which to place them.

Bill Scolding

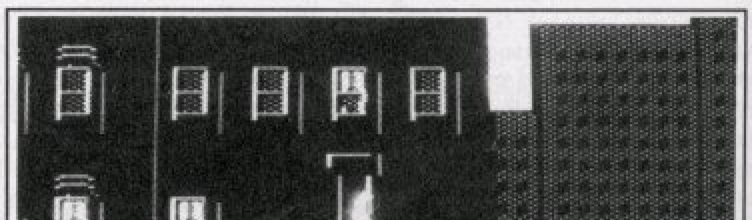


CU RATING
7

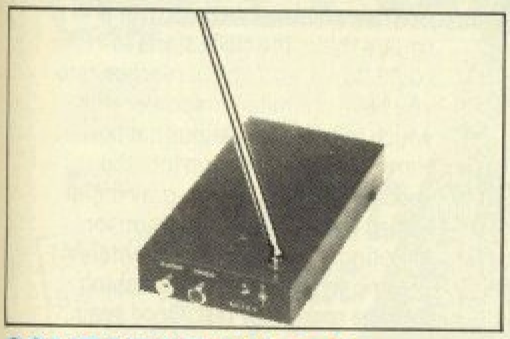
▼ *Graduate to a bow and arrow in the Dark Ages . . .*



▼ *And you'll soon have a machine gun.*



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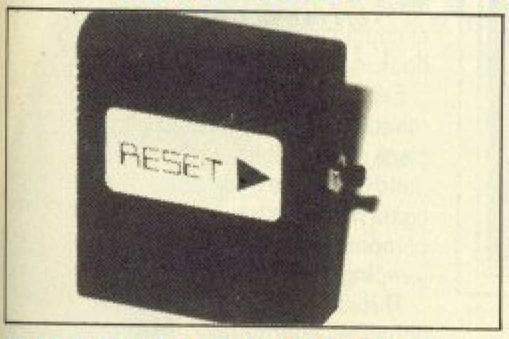
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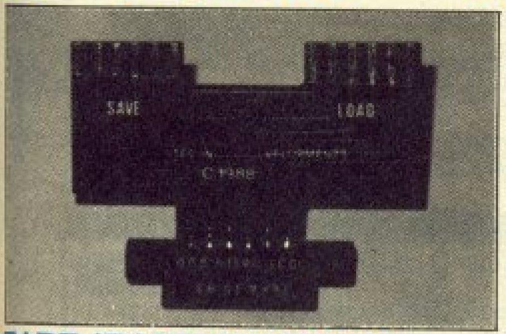
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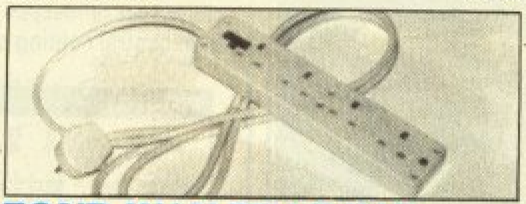
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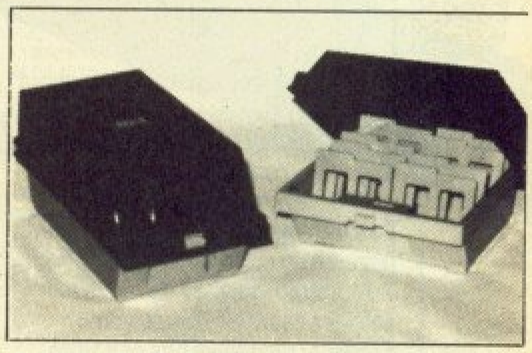
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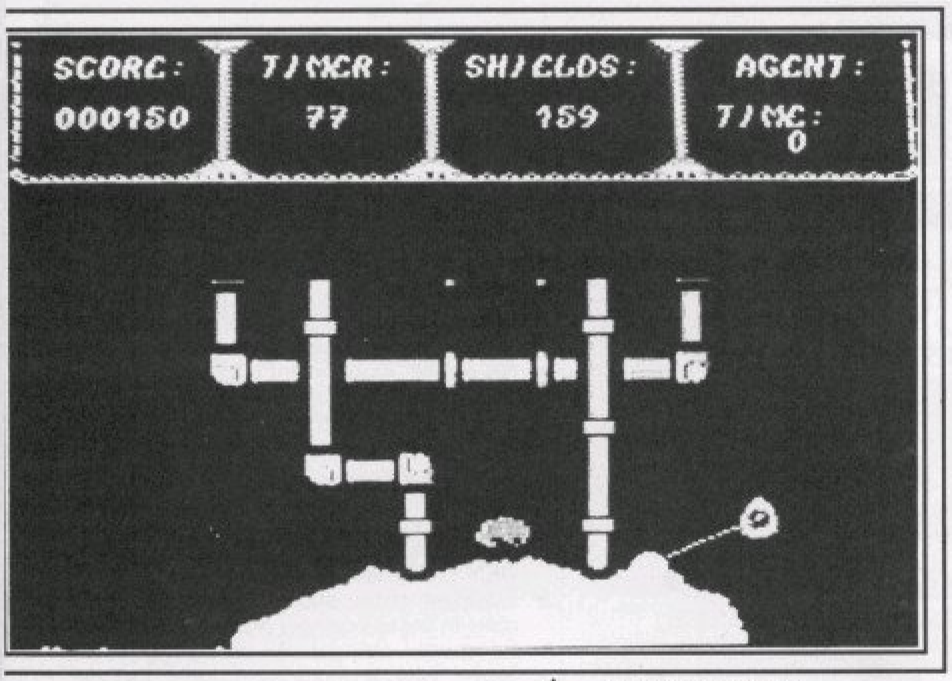
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Thrust through the latticework of pipes.

THRUST II

64/128 Silverbird Price: £1.99/cass

I realise this probably amounts to treason but the first time I recall seeing *Thrust* it was running on a BBC. Since then it was deemed good enough to grace the 64 and has now been given yet another lease of life. An odd sort of game really. Pathetically simple, nothing to shout about graphic-wise, no sound that I can remember, and yet totally addictive, compulsive even.

Ubik, renowned headbanger and 64 synth man, has taken *Thrust* and jazzed it up considerably.

Although you may never have seen, or heard of *Thrust*, you'll probably recognise bits of it from other games. The game is based around the classic zero gravity theory of spaceship animation programming. Which is to say that your rocket ship has but one thruster, conveniently situated at the rear of the craft. A blast on the thruster sends you forward, or up, or, down, or wherever your nose happens to be pointing at the critical moment.

Panic sets in when you get around to thinking about stopping. The only way to do this, of course, is to turn yourself around until the thruster is pointing in the opposite direction to that in which you are travelling and apply the appropriate degree of reverse thrust.

Appropriate being the operative word here. Novice pilots will experience the intergalactic equivalent of the L-driver's 'kangaroo hop'. Veteran pilots will cack their pants in mirth as you head, at near light speed for the left hand side of the screen, only to turn, thrust and 'elastic band' it back where you came from.

Once you get the hang of the basic manoeuvres, you can actually start playing the game. This involves thrusting your way around a cavernous landscape filled with left-over central heating pipes. Some nifty thrusting is required to get through the narrower crevices and into the nooks, where you will find some square things.

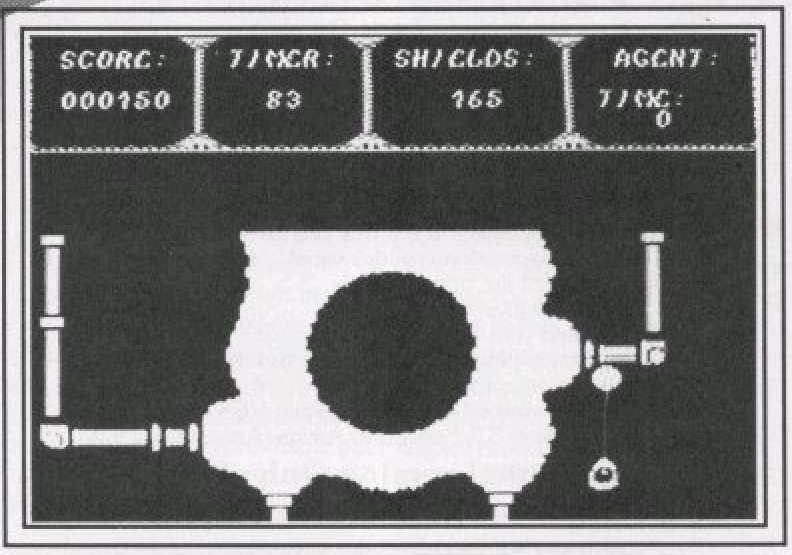
When you land, or pass over a square thing, the clock starts to count down, and until it reaches zero you have unlimited firepower with which to blast the various nasties. Here, of course, you run into the second dilemma of zero-grav flight. Which is that the best position for shooting at something is inevitably the one which sends you crashing into the rocks very fast. Once again, the gut reaction, more often than not, is to turn through 360 degrees and whack on the thruster, so that you hit the wall with twice the force than had you done absolutely nothing. Practice, practice. . .

When you've got to grips with blasting the nasties — worms, revolving stars, squid things, skulls, etc — you can get down to the real business, that being the transportation of orbs to the planet surface using a grappling hook. I'll leave you to imagine the problems of coping with an orb on a grappling hook in zero gravity.

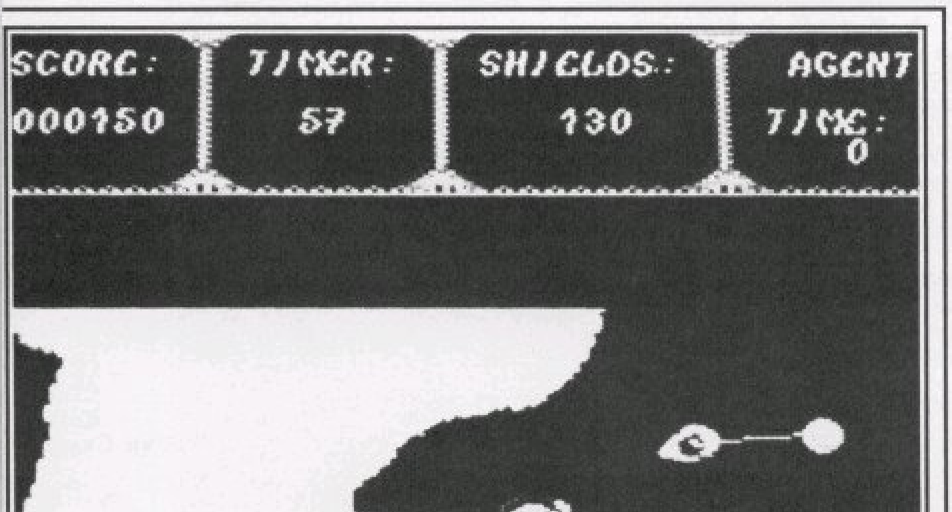
Each orb bought to the surface is miraculously transformed into a piece of ghettoblaster. When you build the whole thing you can start again from scratch — with a new set of monsters and rotating, bouncing jumping things.

Thrust II is still great fun and is enhanced enormously by Ubik's music, 'cute' sprites — the ship looks like a cross between a Domestos bottle and a wine gum — and nice touches like the high score table of 'Today's Grooviest Thrusters'.

Ken McMahon



. . . and zap those nasties



Avoid those rocks . . .

THRUST II — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

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Video	7
Audio	8
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Endurance	6
VFM	8

CU RATING: 7

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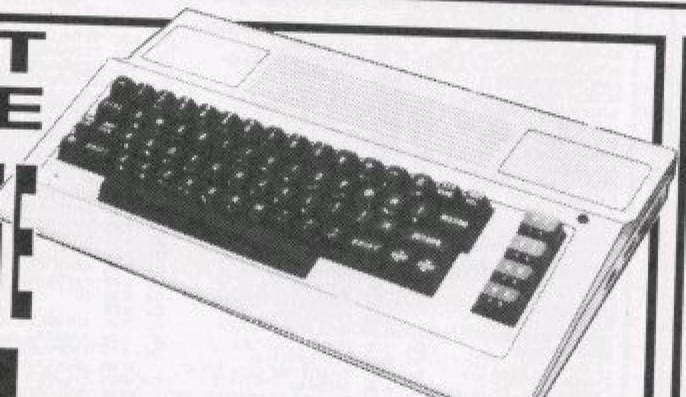
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CHEAPO ROUND-UP

U.C.M.
M.A.D.

Mastertronic's chavvy answer to *Ikari Warriors* — only considerably worse (makes you wonder what the question was). *U.C.M.* is well presented, with a great title tune, but it plays like a brick. So much for the *Ultimate Combat Mission* ... Funnily enough, it features the sprites from Elite's conversion of *Commando* ... OK, so maybe it's not so funny. **(3)**

CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING
US Gold

Another re-release clamouring for your pocket money is Epyx's successful wrestling beat 'em up. Undoubtedly one of the best of its kind anywhere it offers neat graphics, good animation, large, witty characters and canvas thumping gameplay.

There's eighteen moves crammed in to *CW* and they're all authentic. Get to grips with headlocks, pile drivers and the suplex, then try them on uglies like the poncey Prince Vicious or fearsome red injun sorts like Howling Manslayer.

A must for grapple fans everywhere ... **(9)**



DANE DARE
Ricochet

With the sequel sitting proudly on the shelves what better time to re-release its big brother.

Dan Dare was, and still is one of the best conversions of a comic licence. It features nice graphics, characters which do justice to the artwork of the 50's original and, bit of a shocker this, a game. *DD* contained a neat little arcade adventure beneath its comic style captions. You had to rescue Digby and the Prof from the hands of the Mekon in a neat adaption of ladders and levels type gameplay.

Re-release of the month — no problems ... **(9)**

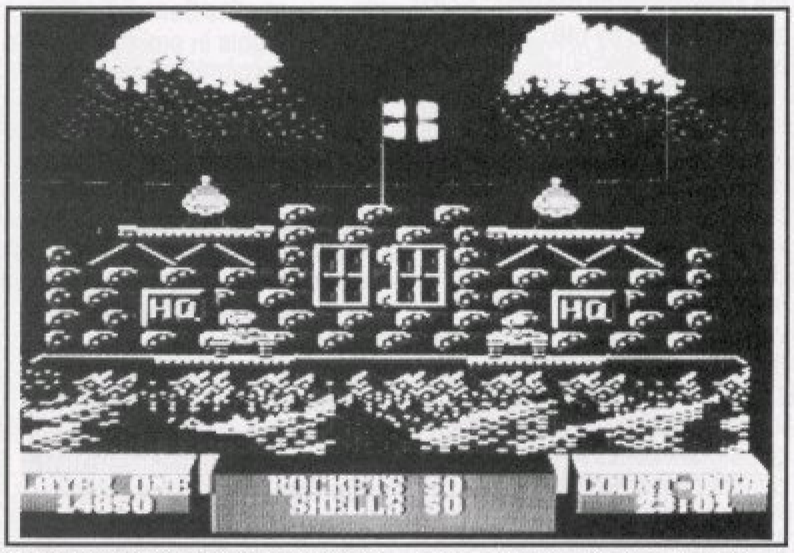
THE HALL OF THINGS
Firebird

This is one of those Firebird games where you wish you could go back to the *Invaderload* because the graphics and gameplay are better. *Hall of Things* is a conversion of a *four-year-old* Spectrum game! What can you expect, then? Sampled sound? Parallax scrolling? No. What you get is lots of green boxes and a stick figure that runs around from location to location.

If *Hall of Things* can be noted for anything it is that it predates the likes of *Gauntlet* by a couple of years and that should only be of passing interest when you compare it to other *Gauntlet* cheapos on the market. Someone, somewhere's extracting the urine.**(2)**



◀ **The Hall of Things**



BATTLE VALLEY
Rack It

Suffering Stars! A group of terrorists have stolen a couple of medium range nuclear missiles and intend to destroy the werld! Egad! Only you can prevent this — with your super sleek fleet of tanks and choppers. Negotiate the hilly terrain of Battle Valley in your tank, destroying gun emplacements, missile launchers and enemy outposts. Use your thrifty chopper (once you've got it up) to wipe out air strikes and repair bridges. Wowza! Sounds great — but it ain't so hot. The good graphics and first class presentation barely compensate for the mediocre gameplay in this run-o'-the-mill shoot 'em up. Ah well, you can't have everything ... **(6)**

SCOUT
Mastertronic

Cheap shoot 'em ups are ten a penny these days but a good one and a tough one never goes amiss. That's what you get with *Scout*. Navigate a scout capsule across a hostile planet in search of bits of your spaceship is the basic idea and plenty of exact hopping and firing is needed in what turns out to be a niggly but attractive blast.

The inlay promises eight planets and extra weapons, but best of all there's loadsofaliens! Yeah! LOADSOFALIENS! ... **(7)**

TANIUM
Players

Ho hum, a horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em up. A greet stimmy puh of a horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em up at that. The graphics are dreary, so's the sound — and so's the gameplay for that matter (Zzz). Wave after (yawn) wave of uninspiring aliens zip across the screen in a predictable and uninteresting manner, until you reach the end of a level where you meet the deadly snakey alien. And he's just as at home to Mr Yawny as the rest of 'em. Try eating your money instead (*Eh? — V. Confused Ed.*). **(1)**.

STREET MACHINE
Power House

This dreadful multi-directional scrolling *Super-Sprint*-style racing game was released over a year ago — and even then it was widely regarded as dated. Now it's been re-released at a budget price — well, forget it. Two quid is still asking too much. **(1)**

HEROBOTIX
Rack It

Remember Ocean's NOMAD? Well this is similar (ish), only marginally better (which isn't saying much). Trundling around the maze-like corridors of the enemy space base, shooting robots in an attempt to locate six pieces of a particle destroyer and destroy a super computer is tedious. **(3)**

Letters

Bangkok basher

● I agree with Jonathan Laycell about the quality of your covers, they are really kool, also all your posters and artwork are kool especially the ones by Philip Bond and Jamie Hewlett. The poster/calendar arcade at the end of the universe was kool (who didn't spot Mike Pattenden — Neal Hudson). Anyway back to the covers, I only get a quick glance at them as after two minutes — RRIP! — the cover has fallen off and my cat has attacked it and it's in shreds, so if the artwork inside the magazine is anything to go by the covers must be good.

Also Hot Shots (February ish) was brilliant, very kool especially Mystic Mike's crystal ball gazing, more of that please. I think also that you rate games completely wrong, how can you give Bangkok Knights nine out of ten for graphics — oops, sorry video, even though I do not have the game I can see from the black and white photos the graphics look very blocky. Did you give it a good mark because you gave it a double page preview?

Andrew Sedgwick
Epworth,
S. Yorks

The fact that it appeared in black and white counts for nothing. The game scored highly because the graphics were large and well-defined. The fact they were a bit blocky wasn't really a problem. *Bangkok Knights* was a good attempt at pushing the barriers of the 64 back still further. Glad you like Philip Bond he did this month's cover.

Crystal ball time

● I just thought I would continue the software predictions trend by sending you my calendar for 1991:

January: ZZAP! 64 is relaunched and breaks all previous records by having 36 editor changes in one month. Issue One of Crash appears on The Antiques Roadshow, and for the first time ever, Hugh Scully falls asleep live on TV while examining it.

February: Commodore User surpass themselves by offering the whole of Southern England as a competition prize. Distribution workers strike when they hear that the ACE editorial team plan to sellotape a "Thunder Blade III" coin-op onto the front cover of every issue.

March: Mike Pattenden sells his life story to The Sun and sales figures double in one day as Mike buys every copy on sale to wallpaper his house with.

April: The German government state they have retrospectively banned every game Microprose plan to release for the next five years. Elite begin market research to find the most famous person in the world to sign them up for a licencing deal.

May: Elite launch "Buddha's Arcade Bonanza". The Acorn Archimedes sales figures begin to pick up very slightly. Someone went into a computer shop in Solihull and bought one.

June: C+VG begins a new feature called "Games Reviews" which takes up half a page. The remainder of the magazine is needed for the Play by Mail section.

July: U.S. Gold begin sending false poison pen letters to Gorbachev in Reagan's name in the hope they can start a nuclear war and then licence it. Nick Kelly turns around sharply and everyone within 35 metres is whipped round the ankles.

August: Preparation for the 14th PCW show begins. U.S. Gold rent the whole of Earls Court, and start erecting Stereo Speaker stacks 350 feet high.

September: Day one of the PCW show. The local hospitals are suddenly overcrowded by thousands of people with exploded eardrums.

October: The law lords pass a law which dictates that arcades are not toilets. Arcades begin to smell a bit better.

November: At last the Final Ultra Hyper Mega Kills anything 100% unstoppable mk 12.876934 cartridge is released. It fails to stop *Paradroid*.

December: Elite release the ultimate Christmas compilation which includes every game ever released for the 64 on one tape. The German Government plans to ban the software industry.

Gary Whitta,
Chingford,
London E4

And now for some messages from the other side . . .
Nigel: *Gran is sorry she beat your high score and forgives you for bludgeoning her to death with the power pack.*
David: *The cash is in the base of the Golden Joystick.*

Freakoid

● Having been prompted by divine inspiration to write this correspondence, you'll be pleased to hear that this is not another uninteresting complaint about your utterly fantabulous mag from another self-centred little turnip with more money than brain cells who sits on his ar★!★ all day scrutinizing your mag for spelling-errors.

What I really wrote to you about (don't be fooled by the classic sense of humour and debonaire literary form) is my own (look at this for a corker, 16 letters) autobiographical sob story (hankies out all). About two years ago I got my 64. It had a strange lure over me from the beginning and pretty soon I was hooked. It grew on me (not literally). I used to play games all night for a couple of nights a week and I had to wear dark glasses during the day to hide my being an addict (God! I looked a dick at Christmas). I lived for my computer. My girlfriend noticed the change and left me for the short wimp down the road (so I fed his lips to his ears, but we won't go into that). Things got worse. I became a walking pile of jelly. People began ignoring me, I was in effect a social disease. I was a member of Computer Freaks Anonymous and I was also registered in the public records as being a serious danger to wimps and computer-haters everywhere. But nothing worked. I craved more games, more interfaces and databases, more money (remember the Brixton-Matt gold-bullion robbery?) I was becoming a danger to my own very being until I was able to drain my desires in your lifesaving magazine. Slowly my freak-rate went down until now I am a just above average freak.

Joe Brennan,
Ballyjamesduff,
Ireland

Well thanks, Joe, for sharing your problem. We hope it will help other sufferers face up to theirs.

Pride

● I am writing about your cool mag. Every time I buy it I get hooked on the cool stuff that gets put in, the reviews on fab arcade games like: *Wardner, Double Dragon, Gauntlet* and *After Burner*.

Let's get down to business: I am the proud owner of a Commodore 64 (well it was me dad who bought it I suppose!). Anyway, as I was saying I am the pround owner of a Commodore 64 and it works just as well as any.

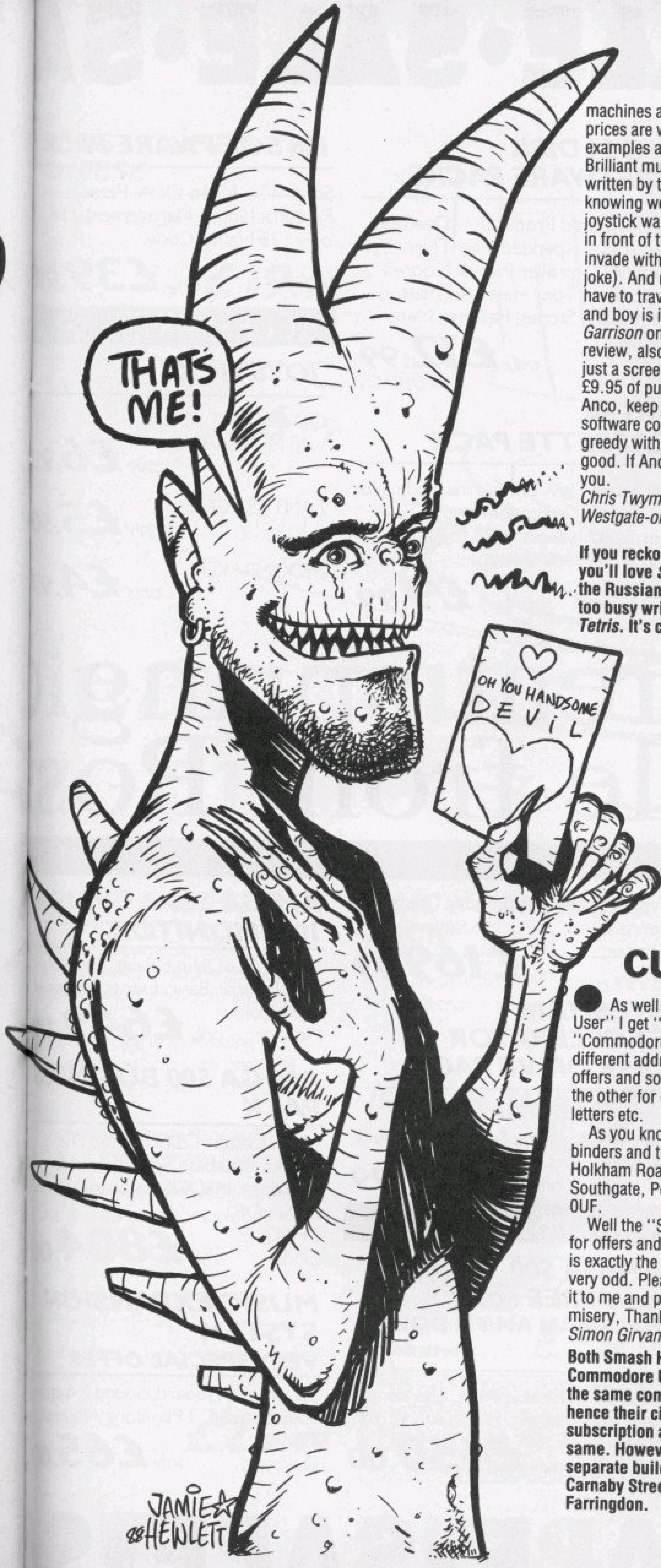
Thomas Carr,
Cheshire

Have you a funny story about a working 64? Write to Working 64s, The Sun, PO Box 487, Virginia Street, London E1 9BW. There's £5 for each original, exclusive reply published.
(Erm, you sure about this Gaz? Ed)



XR35 owners club

● Well let me say right at the beginning I'm a Commodore lover. I started with a VIC 20 (R.I.P. Sob Sob) went up to Commodore 64, and now an Amiga. How's that for faithfulness. I have spent many sleepless nights on these



machines and let me say software prices are well justified. Recent examples are *Tetris* (C64). Brilliant music, excellent game, written by the Russians no doubt knowing we are a country of joystick wagglers — get us sitting in front of the tele then they can invade without us knowing (only a joke). And now for the Amiga. I have to travel 15 miles for games and boy is it worth it. I got *Garrison* on the strength of your review, also I bought *XR-35* on just a screen shot from an ad — £9.95 of pure blasting. Well done Anco, keep it up and other software companies don't get greedy with Amiga software. Get good. If Anco can do it, so can you.
Chris Twyman
Westgate-on-Sea

If you reckoned *XR-35* was good you'll love *Sidewinder*. As for the Russians invading they're too busy writing a follow-up to *Tetris*. It's called *Glasnost*.

CU Hits

● As well as "Commodore User" I get "Smash Hits". Like "Commodore User" it uses two different addresses. One for offers and some competitions and the other for competitions and letters etc.

As you know the address for binders and t-shirts etc. is 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Southgate, Peterborough PE2 OUF.

Well the "Smash Hits" address for offers and some competitions is exactly the same. I find this very odd. Please can you explain it to me and put me out of my misery, Thanks.
Simon Girvan

Both Smash Hits and Commodore User are owned by the same company, EMAP, hence their circulation and subscription addresses are the same. However, they're in separate buildings in ex-trendy Carnaby Street and we're in fab Farringdon.

Evolution theory reflected

● *Super Real Darwin* is, in fact, the sequel to Data-East's *Darwin 4078*, which is a rather brilliant blaster that appeared a while ago. NOT anything to do with a so-called "famous" evolution theorist, actually. So there. Maybe if you give *SRD* a chance you'll get into it, know what I mean — my school dinner money used to disappear into *4078* every day when that first surfaced.

Au revoir, mon petit pois,
Mike Thomas

So now NK knows. He should have known in the first place, but he's so far down the evolutionary ladder that crustaceans have higher IQs.

Beefy ones

● Is Sean "beefy" Brennan called so because he keeps farting or is he taking lessons of M.P?

Now onto CU "Letterspeak" a letter from Simon Kavanagh:- I got a letter of the month, so being a greedy git I decided to write in again.

And finally (trumpet fanfare) why did CU bother to do that last screen thingie? Cos all my mates have it too and I can't tell any of them cos they know I didn't beat it and it's so sad.

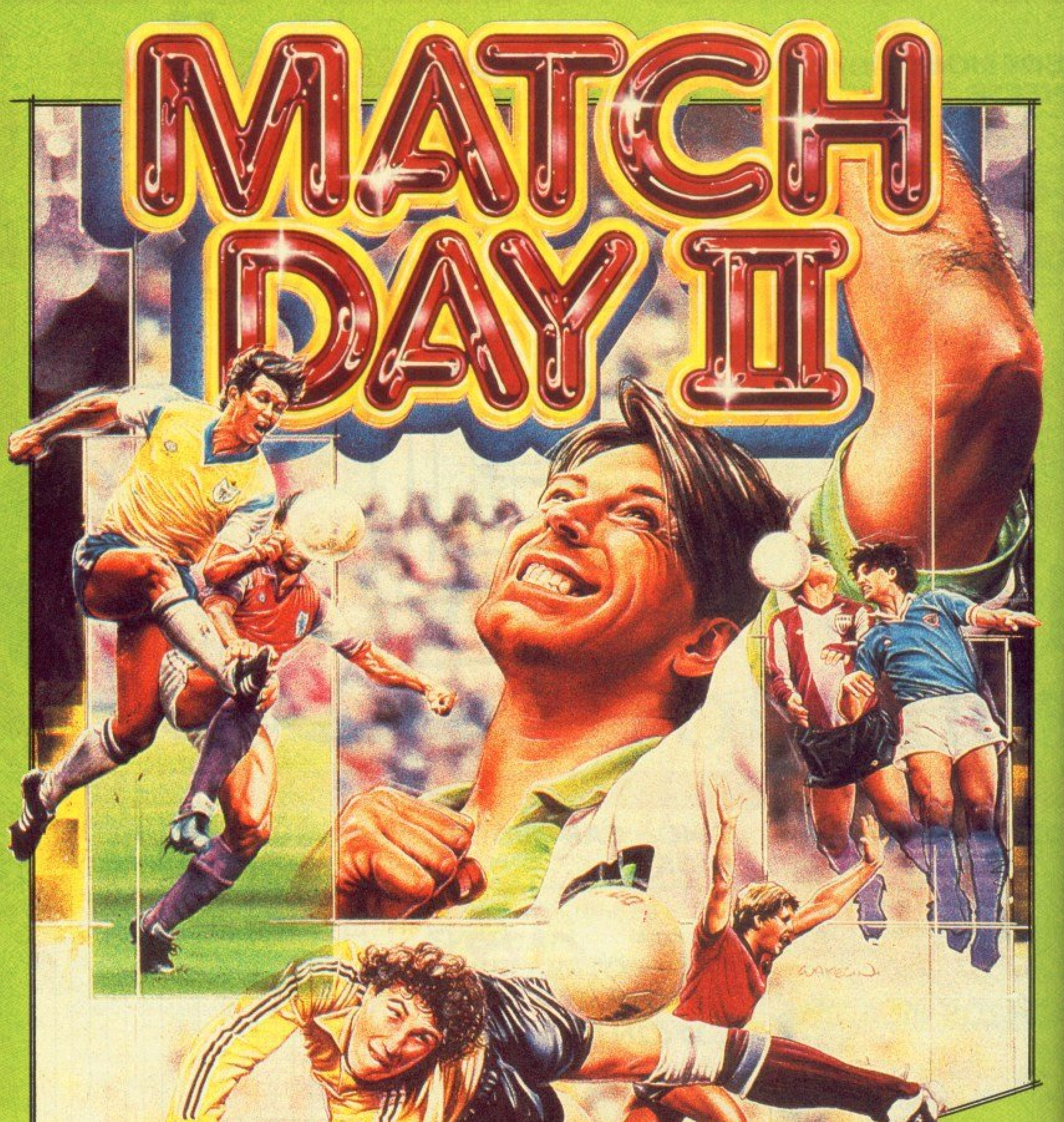
Waaaah.
Dave B
Waltham
S. Humbs

Sean is just plain beefy. Mainly because he eats too much. As for Final Frontiers, we never thought of that. Aren't we silly?

Berk

● The other day I bought a copy of *Combat School*, only to find it wouldn't work. Angered, I returned the cassette to my local computer shop and exchanged it for another — only to find that it too was faulty. This happened six times, until the shopkeeper offered to help. Imagine my surprise when I realised that I had my joystick in the wrong port all along! I wonder if any of your readers have had a similar experience?

Gaz Smith,
Ilford,
Essex



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INTO THE VALLEY

BY KEITH CAMPBELL

WOLFMAN!

CRL
Price: £9.95
64/128

Following *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, when you have a reputation like Rod Pike's, can be no easy task. Whereas his previous adventures were based on the original novels of Bram Stoker and Mary Shelley respectively, this time the storyline is his own. The central character is a werewolf, which, of course, you get to play, but not all the time. For those not in the know, a werewolf is a man by day, but has the nasty habit of turning into a flesh-hungry wolf at night.

As the adventure starts, you have just awoken from a heavy sleep, and become distressed to find your doublet tattered and bloody. Strangely you don't seem to have cut yourself. But when you discover that the crowd gathered down the lane has found the naked body of a local girl, you begin to put two and two together — and so does the crowd . . .

Escaping the crowd is your first problem, and this gave me great difficulty. There are a number of constraints in the program that force you to carry out certain actions that although relevant, are not entirely a necessary prerequisite for the task you wish to perform. And although the vocabulary itself is not much of a problem, the way the words are strung together sometimes is.

Once through this, you are on your way to finding out what makes a werewolf tick, and to learning the terrible truth about yourself. You journey far, and find it difficult to control your passion for blood. But this you must learn, or the game will end — usually with a gory picture.

Onward you journey, and before long the player changes roles, to become the beautiful maiden Nardia: walking along a path one night, Nardia discovers a handsome stranger lurking in the shadows. Fascinated, she strikes up a conversation with him, and finds he is tired and hungry, having journeyed far without food. So she invites him back to her place for the night.

The stranger soon falls asleep in her bed. nardia is willing, and so is he. Oops — there goes another throat!

Eventually Nardia becomes kidnapped by a gang of evil wolf hunters, and as Wolfman once again, you must rescue her, for now you love her dearly, and eventually reach a secret monastery, which holds your salvation — if one exists.

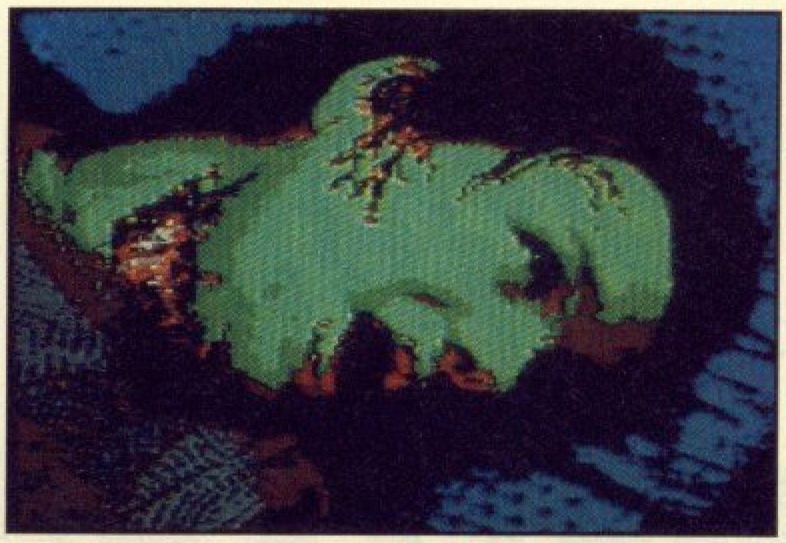
As in *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, Rod Pike treats his character with great sympathy, portraying him as a wretched human tortured by a cruel quirk of nature, unable to resist his evil desires when the wolf in him takes over. The text is very dramatic, and quite horrific in places.

The few pictures in the adventure are digitised, and full-screen in size. Added by CRL, these do not differ a whole lot from those we have seen before. Like, for example, a dead head on its side, with blood oozing from the mouth, all too obviously comprised of small rectangles. Two versions of the game are on release; one with a 15+ certificate, the other rated at 18+. The only diffeence is in the graphics. In the 18+ version (which I have not seen) you get an animated decapitation scene.

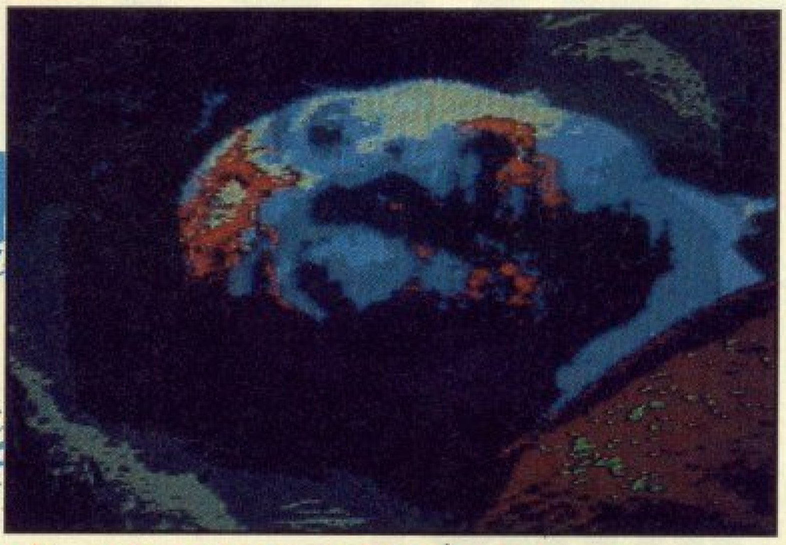
Wolfman was written with a Quill modified by Tim Gilbert to accept four word input, and comes in three parts. As well as being available from stores, Wolfman is to be bundled with *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, and offered as a trilogy by the Home Computer Club.

Dracula and *Frankenstein* have had (and still got) a strong following among CU readers. The adventures have more than once been compared very favourably with Infocom adventures. In *Wolfman*, Rod Pike's touch is getting surer. *Wolfman* is a sure-fire winner. He has done it again — only better!

Graphics ...	7
Playability ...	8
Puzzleability ..	8
Overall ...	7



Yuk! Under 18s turn the page . . .



"But they said it would help my complexion . . ."



Aaah! How 'nice'. Hold on — where's the gore?

INTO THE VALLEY

INTRO

This month I'm reviewing some home-grown adventures, available by mail-order only from the home of the author.

Home-grown adventures are mostly written by enthusiasts, typically with the GAC or Quill, and are budget-priced. The games become known to the adventuring world usually through reviews in fanzines, and occasionally through reviews in the big computer games monthlies.

It is rare for a home-grown adventure to reach the quality of a commercially published game. It is equally rare for one to be as abysmal as the worst of commercial adventures, and *Zzzz* and *Inspector Flukeit* are two titles that spring readily to mind.

Out of the recent batch that arrived I discarded three as being too poor to discuss in depth. *The Other Kingdom* by Keith Reay (XL Software) was too shallow, with poor grammar and spelling/typing cropping up in the text. *The Challenger Mission* from the same source, was a sort of shuttle flight simulation in adventure format, with the player's next instruction given in the text much of the time.

I also rejected *Heaven Is Hell* by Steven Gaskell (Comsoft Software) as being too full of the private world of S. Gaskell.

Those games I did select for review both came from the same source — Mandy Rodrigues, an adventure enthusiast of some years standing, using the label Atlas Adventure Software.

Both adventures run on the C-64, and are priced at £2.99 each on cassette, £3.99 each on disk. They are available by mail order only from: Atlas Adventure Software, 24 Maes Y Cwm, Llandudno, Gwynedd LL30 1JE.

BARNEY BROWN AND THE CHICAGO CONNECTION

Roger Ranger of MI5 has sent you a frantic call for help. He needs a top secret file taken to him in Chicago. You, as his co-agent Barney Brown, start off in your bedroom, empty handed. For a spy thriller, there follows a helluva lot of mundane domestic complications to overcome before you can get started into the plot proper.

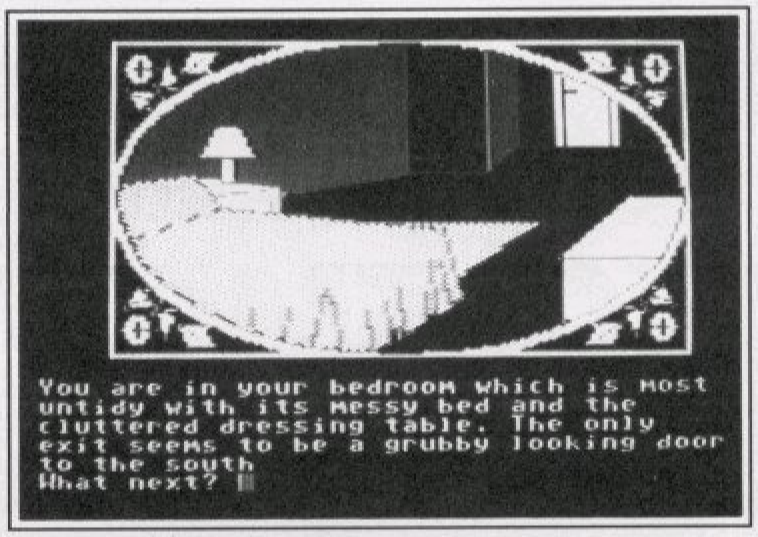
You can't remember where you put anything, and the final atmosphere-destroying part of this pre-amble comes when you have to look under the dustbin to get the key for your shed, so as to be able to break your piggy bank open. All search and examine stuff here, with nary an inspired puzzle to be seen.

The adventure is GACked, recognisable as such immediately you see the graphics with their typically GACked borders, which are scattered about at selected locations. You can also tell when your input is not going to be understood, by the ominously long pause after hitting RETURN. Unfortunately, that happens quite a lot.

A lot has been said about redundancy in parsers — do you really need to be able to put things in things, and carry out sophisticated but unnecessary actions? Given a bed in a bedroom, is it unreasonable to be able to expect to lie down in it? Or if not to be allowed, to at least be told you haven't time enough? Not so here! GET INTO BED elicits NO WAY COULD YOU CARRY THAT, whilst pretty nearly every other command to achieve the same end results in THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE.

Likewise the bathroom cabinet. You can take a shaver out of it, but there's no way you can put it back in and shut the door. Perhaps it is unfair to expect this degree of sophistication from a home-grown adventure, but it does go to show how we have become used to the realism of the parsers and range of vocabulary in adventures from the like of Infocom and Magnetic Scrolls.

Not a bad game, but very routine. Nothing to get excited about.



BLACK KNIGHT ADVENTURE

Long ago there was a beautiful and happy valley. One day, it was attacked by the evil black knight, and its inhabitants, loyal to the king, were enslaved and imprisoned in the castle dungeons. Those who resisted were destroyed. Only one man survived to take the news to the king. After large forces, sent to free his subjects, have been repelled by the black knight, the king calls upon you, his most trusted kinght. He hopes that single-handed, you may have a better chance of entering the valley unseen, and getting into the castle.

That is the background to the adventure. I often feel that the background scenario to an adventure has been dreamed up after a game has been completed, to lend it more credibility and to engender some kind of atmosphere lacking in the play itself. This is especially so in the beat-the-evil-force-and-free-the-people type plots set in an indeterminate place and time, featuring characters with forgettably fantastic names.

I don't believe this to be the case in *Black Knight*, and in a lot of ways it is a nice adventure to play. The text is nicely written, and quite descriptive. But . . . ! To build up atmosphere it really is necessary to construct puzzles that flow naturally from the setting and objectives. Here there are obstacles all right, but they tend to be what I call "domestic" puzzles, which contribute little, if anything, to the story itself.

For example: Can't get past ferocious dog into farm. Solution (fairly obvious to player): Give doggy a bone. Resultant puzzle: find bone. Solution: bone hidden in suitable 'context' location elsewhere in game, found by examining the right object.

When I came to the river, I headed north, across it, and got a sarcastic message asking me if I could walk on water. So far, so good. But swimming seemed a reasonable means of travel, so I tried. "Oh no you don't — that would be too easy!" came the reply. If I could swim, why should I not take the easy way out? After all, I am going to have enough trouble up ahead with the Black Knight anyway! What I really want is a very good reason for not being able to swim across.

Once again, the adventure is GACked — but this time without graphics. Not a great loss, I would say. Again, not a brilliant adventure, quite competently written (there did seem to be a kink or two in the map — perhaps deliberately), which should pass a few hours.

INTO THE VALLEY

What have *Kayleth, Hulk,* and *Robin of Sherwood* in common? It never occurred to me until I read the Valley's first ever letter from Poland!

Krzysztof Struszczak of Lodz knows from hard experience that these are all adventures with pressing problems right at the start. So for Krzysztof, and other sufferers, the clues section this month will help to take you right into these games.

Suddenly a couple of Scott Adams adventures make a reappearance, with a *Savage Island* and a couple of *Pirate* problems rolling in.

"Who has heard of *The Lost City,* and *Scroll Of Akbar Khan?*" I asked a few months back. Well, it takes a long time for CU to reach Australia, but as soon as he got November's issue in mid-January, Patrick Meehan was writing to let The Valley know about the games. Two of a series, the adventures have very basic text and graphics, with two-word input. "Excellent for beginners," says Patrick. In Australia the games were sold by Mountain Valley Software, who no longer exist. So it looks as if our original correspondent, F. Richardson of Pfungstadt, is out of luck . . .

Steve Templeman wrote from Saltburn to enquire about Adventure Clubs. I can but give a plug to the Adventure Club Ltd, which produces a bi-monthly fanzine. Membership costs £11.95 per annum, and application forms are available from ACL, 64c Menelik Road, London NW2 3RH, or from me c/o The Valley.

Can anyone help the following people who are struggling this month? Stephen Lovell of Rugeley, is trying to find a golden key in Part 1 of *Neverending Story.* "How do you get out of the cavern, and what is the ice pick for?" asks Peter Burns who is playing *Frankenstein.* And who can explain the *Guild Of Thieves* dice problem to Coos Willemsen of Zutphen in the Netherlands?

Whilst your pleas are welcomed in the Valley, please don't ask for the complete solution to an adventure!

ADVENTURE CLUES

KNIGHT ORC:
Cast fly at the statue.

ZORK 3:
The Royal Puzzle: (P=Push) PE S S SE PS N NE PS PS E NE PW SE NW NE PS SW PE NE PS NW N N N PE SW S SE NE N PW NW PS PS W NW NW PS SE SE SE NE PW PW SW PN PN PN NW U.

ZORK 1:
To operate the machine, put the coal and screwdriver into the basket with the torch, and lower it. Put the coal in the machine and close the door. Turn on with the screwdriver.

ZORK 2:
Push the gold machine into the jewel room before operating it.

KAYLETH:
Break the bands to jump off the conveyor, and then go up.

ROBIN OF SHERWOOD:
Stand on shoulders and contrive to kill the guard above.

HULK:
Press the button once before leaving the tunnel as Hulk.

PIRATE ADVENTURE:
The keys are nailed down back home! Dig, and leave the bird for treasure!

SAVAGE ISLAND (PART 1):
Build the raft in the tidepool.

DRACULA:
Don't wear your coat in the train to Stratford!

EMPIRE OF KARN:
Drop the chest and sit on it to avoid a watery grave.

GNOME RANGER:
A unicorn makes a good battering ram. Only the leprechaun can break the witch's wand.

LEATHER GODDESSES:
Send the barge ahead of you, and transport to it when it has passed the ion beam.

JINXTER:
Swim all the way to the chandelier. Have a drink before burning rope!

RESCUE

CAMPBELL'S COMMENT

Here's someone who has a problem getting the answer to his problems. Or has he?

★ I'm having trouble with *Leather Goddesses of Phobos.* I have several problems, the main one of which is decoding the message that the dead alien has. I've tried all the "conventional" codes (shifting the alphabet over a letter, reversing the alphabet etc.) and still couldn't solve it.
Asif Hassan,
Houston.

Campbell's comment: The clue to decoding the message is in the 3D comic that comes with the game. Don't say you haven't got the packaging, Asif?

★ I had been told by a few Commodore User friends that *The Zark Triology* was one (or three) of the best adventure games to be bought for the Commodore. Needless to say I bought them, and at first I was getting through them quite easily, no doubt by the knowledge gained on Spectrum adventures. But I soon hit snags and was blocked in all three games. So now it is with great sadness that I go down on bended knee and beg, nay PLEAD with you for mercy for the sake of my fingernails and hair, for some solutions to my problems.
Francis Flannigan,
Motherwell.

Campbell's comment: Nothing like a few problems to get people grovelling, eh? Keep grovelling while I choose some clues on greues, and peruse this news from Coos . . .

★ It is not easy to buy an adventure game in Holland. Mostly I get them from a mail order company in England or Germany. The games are even cheaper buying them abroad. Sometimes the difference is £20 per piece of software.

Last time I bought *Arazok's Tomb* without reading a review. It has good graphics and a nice storyline and a few good puzzles, but I finished it in one evening. It wasn't worth spending so much money.

I think the Dutch don't like adventures. Even Dutch adventures are not selling well. Once I tried to play a Dutch one but that turned out to be a disaster. I am only used to type in English sentences, so the parser was most of the time completely confused. However, it is not always easy to solve a game in a foreign language. That is the reason I often make use of your unique helpline.
Coos Willemsen,
Zutphen, Netherlands.

Campbell's comment: And not all English or American games sell well here, either Coos. But the Dutch, along with the Norwegians, send more letters to The Valley than adventurers of any other nationality, except of course, the British. As for the *Jinxter* review, perhaps apologies are due to our overseas readers whose native language is not English! It really is a wonderful game with a lot of humour and plenty of puzzles. Narmean? Oops — there I go again! I'll try again: Do you know what I mean?

CAMPBELL'S GROVEL

It seems I was wrong! My "unimpeachable sources", which, even if prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act I would refuse to reveal, let me down. I take back everything I said about the availability of Infocom games!

Before Infocom got tied up with Activision, making Activision the sole distributor of Infocom products, a firm called Softsell imported and distributed the games to the trade in the UK. Difficulties arose over the stock-in-hand at Softsell at the time of the Activision takeover, and it was the way that this was dealt with by Softsell that gave rise to rumours about Activision "dumping" the titles — as a rather hurt Rod Cousins explained to me.

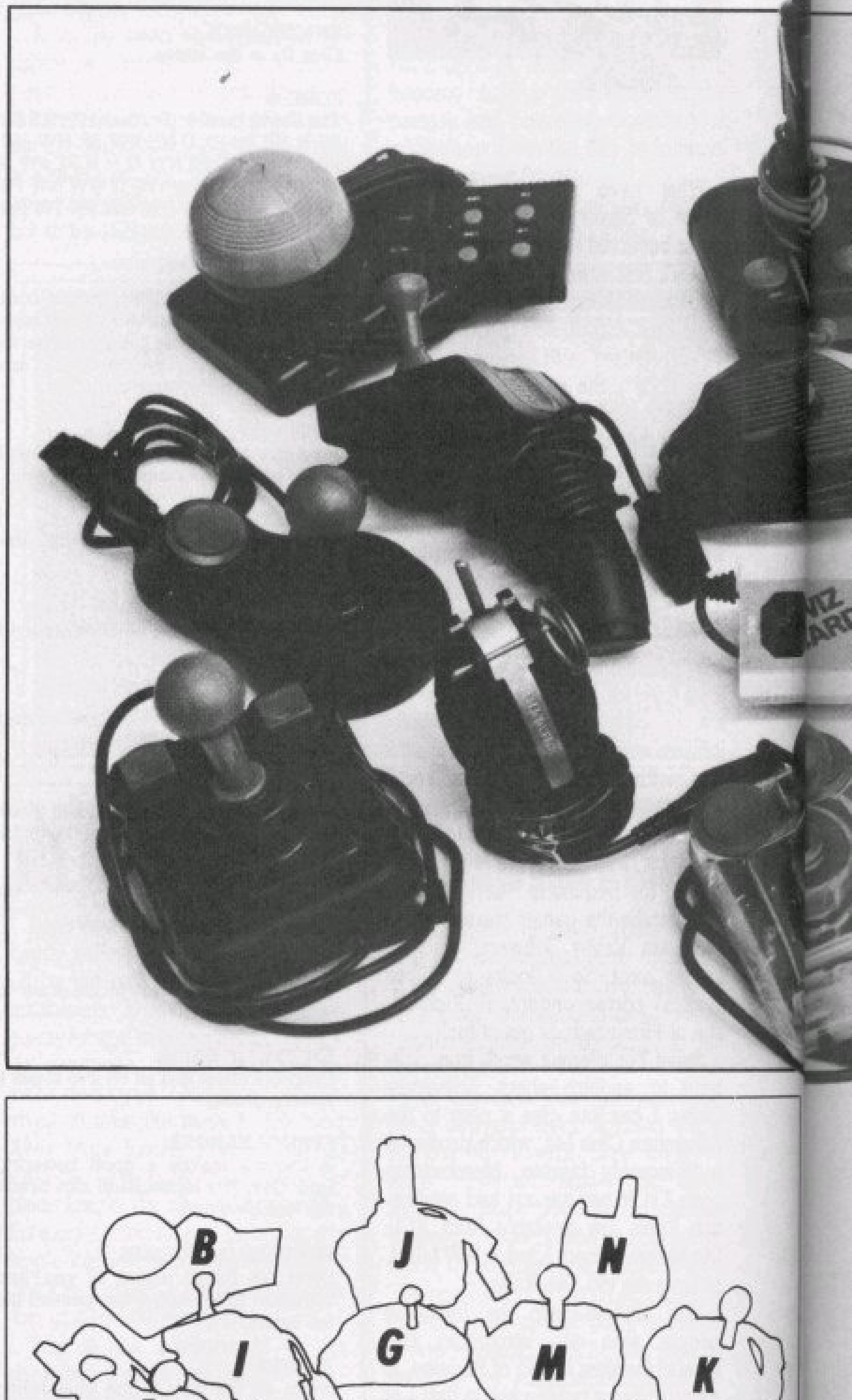
Can't get *Zork?* Not true! If your local dealer is unable to supply, Activision certainly can, through their mail-order service. And there is no 300-orders minimum policy for dealers ordering new products (another rumour that I heard) — 20 or 30 would do nicely, says Rod.

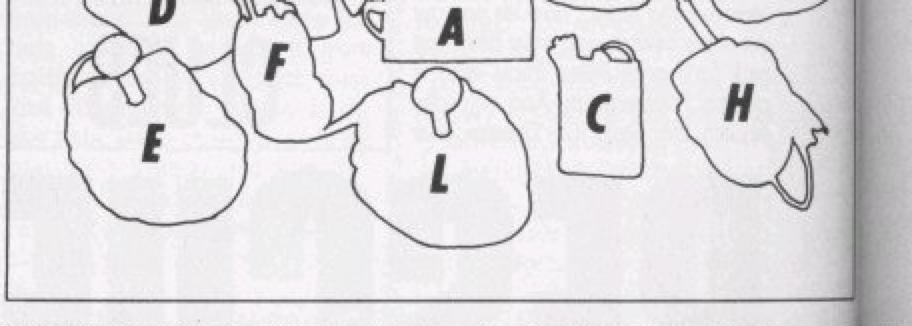
For anyone wishing to mail-order direct from Activision, the address is: Activision (UK) Ltd., Activision House, 23 Pond Street, Hampstead, London NW3 2PN. Telephone: 01-431 1101.

GIVE IT SO

A computer without a joystick is like — well, a fish without a bicycle. A cheese roll without a generous dollop of pickle (too bloody right — Ed). You know how it is. How can you play all those ace Screen Stars if you haven't got something to play them with? So, for the first time in CU's history, here are some joystick reviews . . .

How do you review a joystick you may ask? Quite simple really. Leave it in the hands of the CU staff for a month or so and ask them what they think. An overall rating is provided, taking into consideration the joystick's ergonomics, durability, responsiveness and the like. Basically, all the things one considers when buying a joystick.





A

WIZCARD

Euromax have a fairly extensive range of human to computer interfaces on offer, with something for everyone — from the casual consumer to the connoisseur. At the bottom (cheapest) end of the range there's the *Wizcard*, a cursor controller similar to those found with the Nintendo and Sega consoles. It's not the most comfortable 'joystick' to use, but it is responsive and hard wearing, and retails for an affordable £3.95 (complete with six-month guarantee) . . . **(6)**

B

JOYBALL

The *Joyball* is another Japanese-exported oddity distributed by Euromax in the UK — and though its name may suggest otherwise, it most definitely isn't the sort of aid you might find in an Ann Summers catalogue. Its unusual shape is deceptively ergonomic, although perseverance is the order of the day here as it takes some getting used to. A switch to the right of the controller determines at which of two speeds the rapid fire button functions when depressed — as the hilarious packaging blurb (literal translation from the Japanese) goes to great lengths to tell you. At £11.95 it represents good VFM . . . **(7)**

C

GEOS MOUSE

If you've ever yearned to play *Arkanoid* with a mouse, check out Euromax's excellent *GEOS Mouse and Cheese* package. It's a bit pricey at £38.95, but it does come comlete with a decent art package (the cheese — cute, eh?) and is compatible with the GEOS software — if windows are what turn you on . . . **(8)**

D,E

THE PROFESSIONAL

For something along more conventional lines, try either the *Elite* or the *Professional* Both sticks are also available with a rapid fire feature (in the form of an extra fire button on the *Elite* and an auto-fire switch on the *Professional* — priced at £15.95 and £18.95 respectively). For £10.95 the *Elite* performs well enough, although it's not quite in the same league as the excellent *Professional* quite simply one of the best sticks money can buy (£15.95 to you squire) . . . . **(7)** and **(9)**

ME STICK....



KEY

A – WIZCARD
B – JOYBALL
C – GEOS MOUSE
D – ELITE
E – PROFESSIONAL
F – THE TERMINATOR
G – SPEEDKING
H – SPEEDKING AUTO FIRE
I – THE MAGNUM
J – CHEETAH 125 SPECIAL
K – PRO 5000 (BLACK)
L – PRO EXTRA
M – PRO 5000 (CLEAR)
N – ATARI

F

TERMINATOR

Undoubtedly the most novel joystick available — and also one of the most expensive. Retailing for a hefty £19.95, the *Terminator* is a surprisingly sold piece of equipment, with a quality microswitch mechanism and an unbreakable steel shaft. It's respcnsive and can take a thorough pounding, however its hand grenade shape was a bone of contention. Half of us found it comfortable and effective; everyone else reckoned it was a lump of gimmicky crap. But love it or hate it, you'll be hard pushed to get hold of it ... Until recently the *Terminator* was distributed by Robtek, but now this side of things is being handled by its originators — Supersoft in Denmark. However this isn't anything to do with the UK Supersoft — and they weren't too keen on the Danish company using their name, so this may well cause problems. Keep 'em peeled for the *Terminator* in the CU smalls . . .**(7)**

G,H

THE SPEEDKING

Konix launched the *Speedking* over a year ago amidst a plethora of hype, including a story concerning a durability test performed by the joystick-waggling machine which pushed Konix's baby until it broke many thousands of waggles later. However after a few months in the hands of CU staff, two *Speedkings* have — to all intent and purposes — bitten the dust and are now certainly less responsive than they were. Despite being moulded to fit snugly in the hand (big hands at that), palm-ache is not uncommon after half an hour's intense use — although this is more down to the positioning of the fire button. Still MP rates it and you could do worse for £11.99 or £12.99 with auto-fire . . . **(7)**

I

THE MAGNUM

Great name — pity about the quality of the stick. Mastertronic's one and only didn't last long in the hands of Mad Mike Pattenden, who frequently grumbled about its unresponsiveness and resistance to diagonal movements. The *Magnum*'s only saving grace is that it's comfortable to hold . . . **(5)**

J

CHEETAH 125 SPECIAL

Unlike its predecessor, the *125 Special* isn't just a conventional joystick — with a flick of a switch you suddenly having a rotating shaft and four independent fire buttons to play with, thanks to two leads — one for each ports. According to Cheetah, "all the major software houses are now releasing games to take advantage of this new development". However we've yet to see anything to qualify this statement. It's a nice idea, let down by the quality of the stick, which is reasonably responsive but feels quite fragile — indeed, it didn't last for long after a few weeks of healthy thrashing. For £12.99, the *125 Special* represents only average waggle-value for money . . .**(5)**

K,L,M

COMPETITION PRO

Dynamics' *Competition Pro* comes in three slightly different guises ... the *Pro 5000*, with either black or clear case (£14.95 and £15.95 repectively) — a great stick marred only by the use of leaf switches for the fire buttons (they're not quite as durable as microswitches) — and the *Pro Extra* for £16.49 (basically a clear-case *Pro 5000* with auto-fire and slow motion feature — and, more importantly, longer-lasting microswitches for the fire buttons. Hoorah. Quite what use the slow motion is, no-one here is sure. Still, a damn good stick) . . . **(8)** and **(9)**

N

ATARI

Along with the relaunch of Atari console and 8-bit machine comes the reappearance of their classic joystick — retailing for only £4.99. While it doesn't use a more modern and durable microswitch mechanism, the Atari joystick is sturdy and reliable. Worth a look at the price. **(7)**

MORPH

BY ANDREW BRAYBROOK

You want hot tips? You got 'em . . . Once again CU is proud. Proud to present yet more definitive hints on how to get the most out of your favourite games. This month Andrew Braybrook, distinguished author of such classics as *Paradroid* and *Uridium*, provides the après ski low-down on his latest masterpiece, *Morpheus*. Take it away, Andy . . .

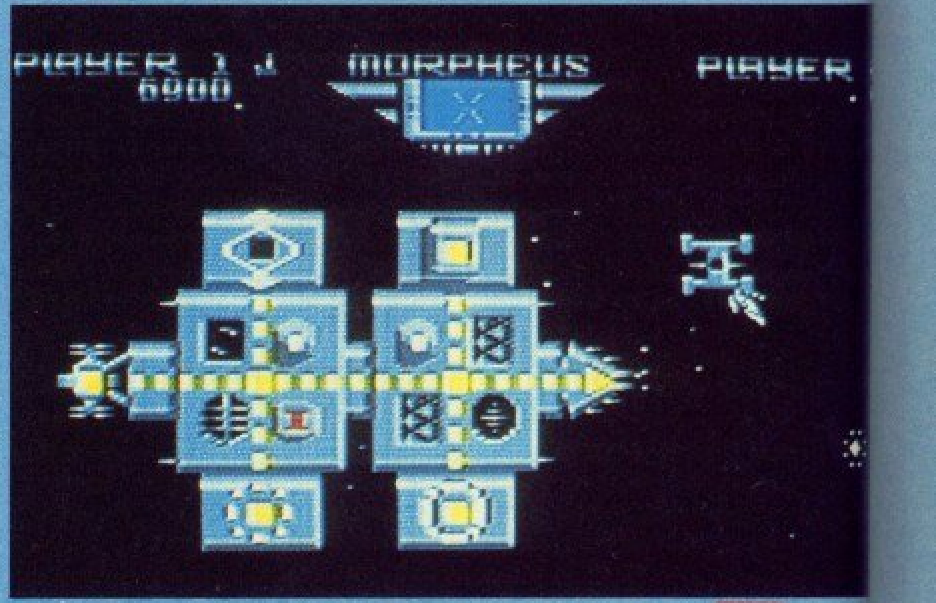
I think that the way an expert Player approaches *Morpheus* is completely different from the way a novice does. There are lots of useful gadgets to help the beginner to learn how the ship functions, many of which would be replaced by more practical battle system by an expert. Think of learning to drive: starting in a Land-Rover would be difficult as it has more gears, and is much heavier to drive. It is much better to learn in a Metro, but you wouldn't drive across a ploughed field in it!

The first few games are very likely to be short, but provided a few Morphai are disposed of then some money will be gained. This should be invested in an Inertia Convertor System as soon as one is affordable at the outset of a game. Then the object of the exercise will be to stay out of trouble long enough for it to be built for you. This will take you about two minutes in the Aither.

Staying out of trouble is not too difficult, once you know how. The roaming Morphai run around in packs in open space. Once they have cottoned on to where you are they may pursue you, or run away, or just ignore you. The latter is especially true of the Cautes, meaning 'sharp and jagged rocks'! Roaming Morphai tend not to exist around the nucleus or charge orbitals, so the thing to do is fly quickly forwards to an orbital, despatching or fleeing from Roamers, then stopping near it, keeping the beacon in range. The beacon is harmless but it helps in locating the exact position of a nearby orbital. The radar is only a medium-range tool and is difficult to use at close range, rightly so.

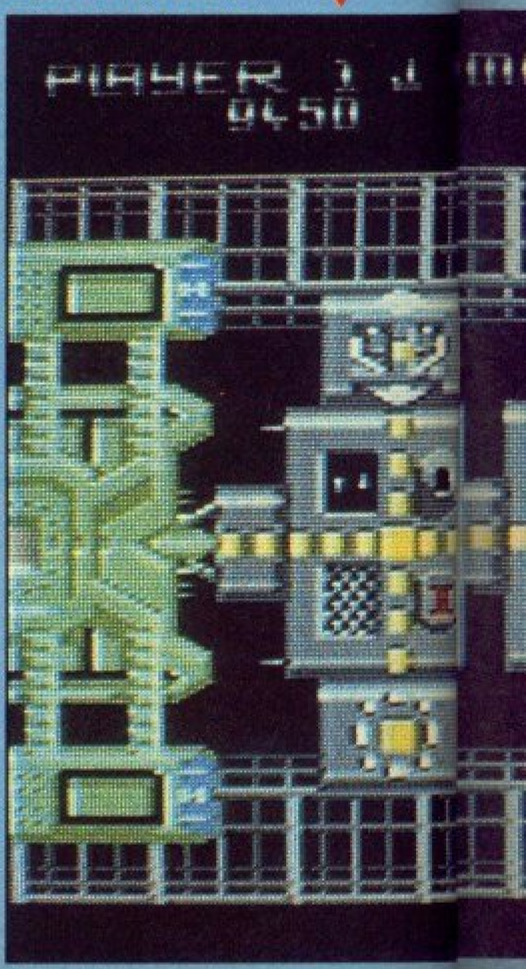
Holding position near an orbital is all very well, but why not extract some charge from it while you're there. Keep close to the orbital while dealing with the Morphal produced from it; many early types are fairly harmless, with the exception of Nix and Erebos. The first Aither only requires one orbital to be sucked dry of charge before the nucleus intelligence shuts it down. At this point the nucleus is the place to be, and a zig-zag course in its general direction will avoid most remaining Roamers. Of course this relies on you knowing its rough location. If it is still on the radar screen then this taks is easy, if not then a little searching around should be done. Also, listen to the heartbeat of the nucleus in the background; it quickens as you approach it. After a minute or so, the heartbeat stops and the nucleus dies. As it does so it releases bonus Morphai 'M' symbols. These are the most valuable prizes in the Aither and should be destroyed as quickly as possible, before they fade out. This can be done with the main beam, extra weapons, disruptors, or just plain reckless driving.

What a swish ship! What a crap caption!



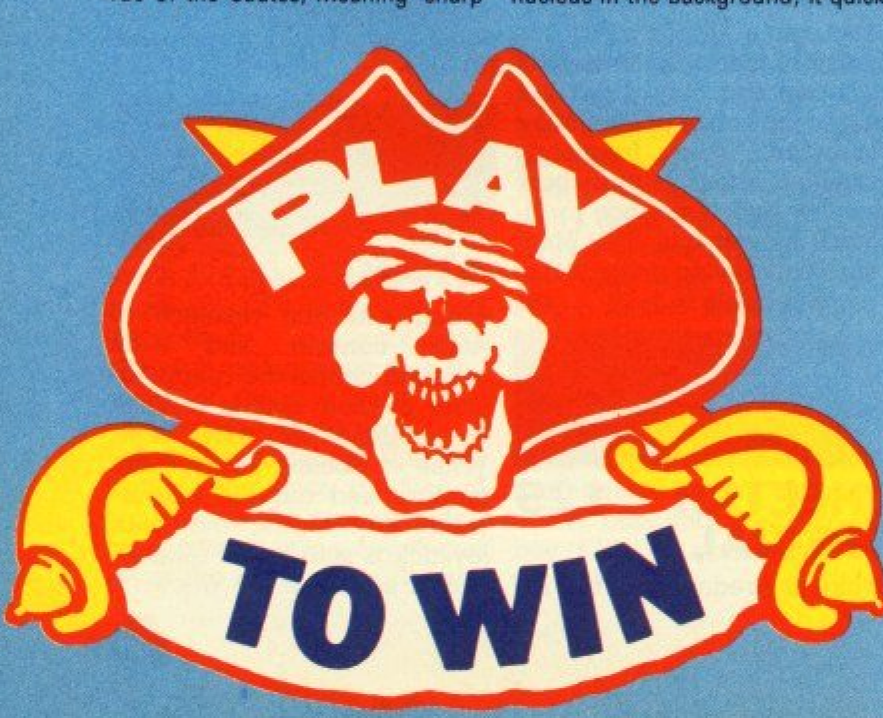
higher speeds. The ship is naturally difficult to control at first as it is capable of travelling at high speed to cross vast distances but is also capable of very accurate positioning. The two modes should not be confused; delicate manoeuvres are best carried out by gently nudging the joystick — the full-blown wrench-the-joystick-out-of-its-socket action should only be used

Another big ship, ready to launch.

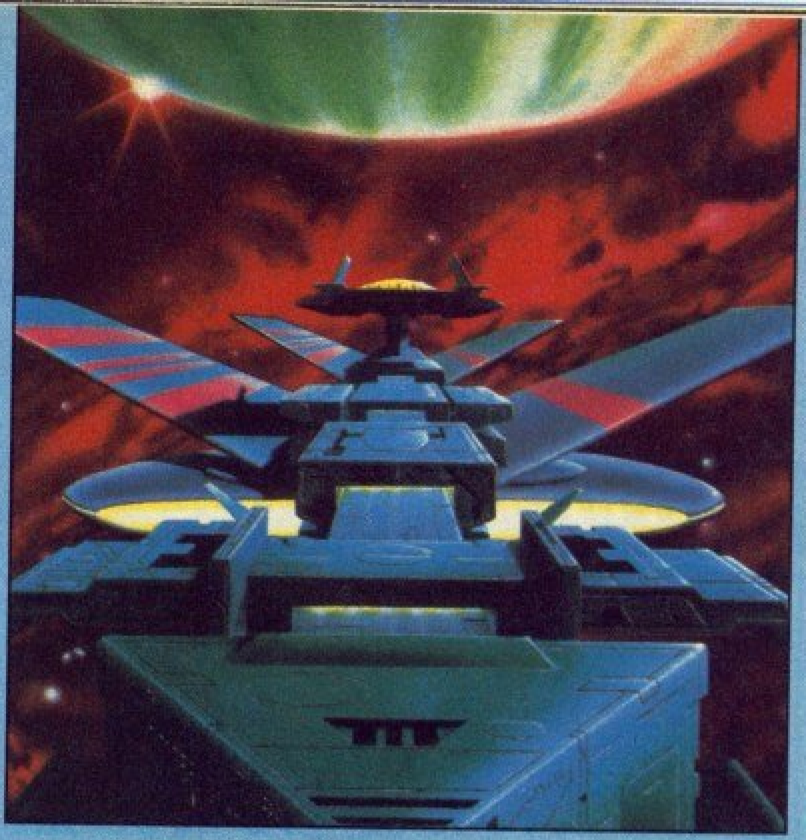


Remember that the ship is behaving as a collection of different systems which would go to make up any space combat vehcile. It is flexible in its design, and any system added to the ship will affect its running in some way. The overall design and make-up is up to you. To avoid complex control panels in the game, all of the ship's functions may be read from the systems that are actually present on your customised ship. Indeed some systems are passive display units, merely reporting on the status of other systems.

In the early stages the whole ship can easily be run from the forward station. The rear station will only be used for strategic withdrawals, which is like running away, but with dignity! The ship has a number of in-built latent systems, like the close-manoeuvring stabilisers. These bring the ship to a halt if it is drifting slowly, Thus allowing accurate lining up for firing the main beam, although they will not work at



EUS





for emergency escapes.

Another latent system is the Shield Matrix. There is one present in each hull but it requires the addition of a Shield Generator to bring it into operation. It channels sheild power from all present Shield Generators to bring into building a protective field. The Shield Display System uses brightness coding to show the output of the shield matrix at any time. A good way to demonstrate this to intermediate players would be to use hull HL2, fitted with Shield Display systems, along with some form of Energy Replenisher. Watch the Shield Display brighten slowly as you demat into the Aither. The matrix is charging up, which it should be allowed to complete before engaging any Morphai. Larger hulls have more powerful matrices and will show up brighter. The Shield Generator Providing the power to the matrix will darken slowly as it is drained like a battery. Getting hit by Morphai or their flak results in their instant demise as they are fried by the shield. The Shield Display will darken indicating that it has been hit, and will recover slowly as it takes more power. The Shield Generator may then darken further until it is black, and thus empty. Further hits on the shield will then continue to be absorbed, the Shield Display will continue to darken but it cannot recover as no power is being supplied. Finally the matrix will be empty also, indicated by the black Shield Display. Hits will now drain the main energy banks and may also knock out on-board systems. These are protected only while power is present in the matrix.

Contrast that situation with a ship set up with a Shield Replenisher on board as well as the Generator and Display. This time the Shield Generator also recovers as it is recharged by the Replenisher at the expense of the main energy banks. Advanced users would probably dispense with the Shield Display System in favour of a second Shield Generator for faster recovery on a larger hull, Energy Replenishers being required also.

I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is to use the instruction manual. As you come across new types of system in the catalogue, look them up in the reference section, find out whether they need other systems or weapons to function, and decide whether they will be of any use. Some systems are useful all of the time, othere are only useful with certain others or against certain Morphai strains. A Sheild Display Unit is no use at all without at least one Shield Generator, which in turn is of limited use without a Shield Replenisher, which in turn is a liability without an Energy Replenisher. Many ship functions are related and most ultimately draw on the main energy banks, which represent the lifeblood of the ship.

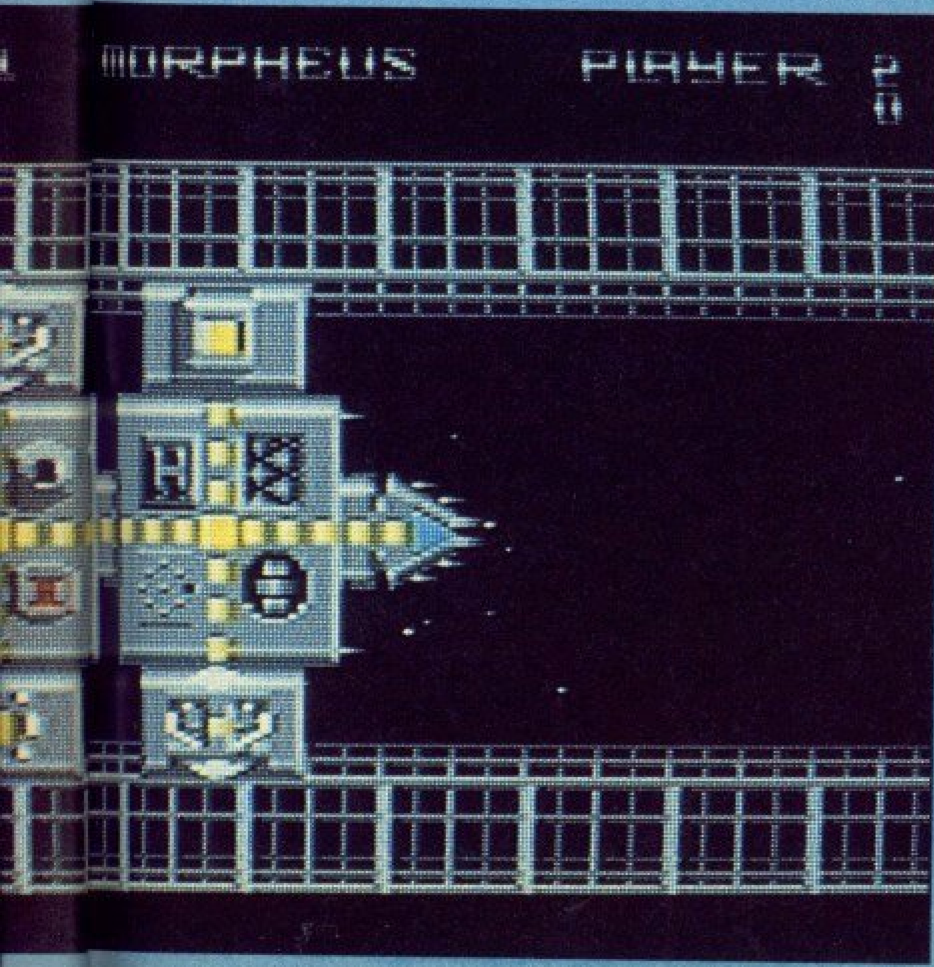
Study also the effect of using multiple systems 'ganged up' on the hull, e.g. two ECM units will have a greater effect on Uridimines than one. Survival to the next level is what it's all about; it's no good having a great plan for next year if you can't even survive until thursday!

Weapons units should be studied as well as the systems. These are of limted use in the early stages and are best ignored until you have a good supply of spare cash. Even then the early single shot weapons are clumsy and slow. These are of limited use in the early stages and are best ignored until you have a good supply of spare cash. Even then the early single shot weapons are clumsy and slow. The eight-directional rapid or simultaneous fire weapons are more useful, but are ultimately hopeless compared to the Disruptor. The weapons you use should always be the latest available, as using obsolete equipment will have very little beneficial effect on the Morphai.

Overall, the best thing to do is experiment with different ship set-ups until you find some which work well. Obviously the set-ups on the smallest hull are limited so much that there is only one really practical set-up once you are playing properly, but it is also possible to evaluate the purpose and suitability of the first eight systems in turn. Good financial management and forward planning are essential elements in making progress. Joystick dexterity and control is also helpful but is not the sole answer. The sonics are also an integral part of the game. So many people dismiss sound as just an embellishment in a game, like the music, but there are 53 individual sound effects in Morpheus, many of which are vital to the successful running of the ship. So turn the sound up and immerse yourself in this interactive experience. See you in Aither 50.

Be careful out there . . .

Andrew Braybrook



Wot no go-faster stripes?



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PLAY TO WIN

BATTLE VALLEY
(Rack-It)

Unlimited ammo, rockets and energy are yours — provided you type in this listing, RUN it and follow the on-screen prompts. Oh, don't forget to put a *Battle Valley* cassette in the C2N . . .

```
100 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 0, 141, 28, 4, 169,
208, 141, 29, 4, 96
110 DATA 169, 0, 141, 67, 50, 141, 46, 58,
169, 165, 141, 184, 69
120 DATA 76, 132, 255, 1, 2, 3
130 FOR L=53234 TO 53263:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT
140 POKE 157, 128:SYS 53234
150 REM (c) R TROUGHTON FEB '88
```

FLYING SHARK
(Firebird)

Look, I'm sorry. I'm so very, very sorry. I'm sorry about the dinosaurs, and I'm even sorrier about the two World Wars. I'm even sorrier still that you can only enter these POKEs with the aid of a reset switch. So if you don't possess such a device, skip this bit. Maybe some kind sole (or soul even) will send us a listing in time for next month. What do you think, kind souls?

Well then. Load the game and when asked to reset the tape counter, do so. Stop the tape and reset the 64. Now enter any of the following . . .

POKE 12822,252 (RETURN) for unlimited bombs.
POKE 7166,252:POKE 7169,252 (RETURN) for unlimited lives.
POKE 2048,162:POKE 2049,0 (RETURN)
POKE 2050,160:SYS 4096 (RETURN) to restart the game. Press fire and start the tape.

UBIK'S MUSIC
(Firebird)

Here's a teeny weeny tip for — well, for the halibut. Reset the 64 — having loaded the program. Wow. It's a version of *Space Invaders* . . .

X15 ALPHA MISSION
(Activision)

Type in this listing. Now deposit one (1) *X15* cassette in t' tape deck and type RUN (RETURN). Follow the on-screen prompt to load the game with invulnerability and unlimited fuel.

```
100 DATA 169, 195, 141, 41, 3, 32, 86, 245,
169
110 DATA 216, 141, 206, 1, 169, 227, 141,
207
120 DATA 1, 96, 169, 0, 141, 64, 136, 141, 98
130 DATA 136, 141, 212, 136, 141, 223, 178,
76, 235, 2
140 FOR L=50149 TO 50184:READ A:POKE
L,A
150 NEXT:POKE 157, 128;SYS 50149
160 REM (c) R TROUGHTON FEB '88
```

ANARCHY
(Rack-It)

A short listing for invincibility — if you want it. Type it in, RUN it, then do as you see on-screen to load the game.

```
100 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 1, 141, 29, 4, 96,
206, 202, 32, 76, 164, 124
110 FOR L=379 TO 393:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT:SYS 379
120 REM (c) R TROUGHTON FEB '88
```

SABOTAGE
(Zeppelin Games)

OK, so maybe this isn't quite what the doctor ordered. But at least these passwords may be of some use. Simply select the password icon and enter the required password as printed below. Note: levels 7 and 8 do not have passwords.

LEVEL	PASSWORD
2	2SKINHED
3	3YOPPA!!
4	4FAT!!!!
5	5SLAPA!!
6	6I●KETS!

And if this isn't good enough, why not type in this listing and RUN it, then follow the on-screen prompts to load the game with unlimited lives during 'Walk About', plus unlimited lives or immunity to sprites during the space battle.

```
0 REM (c) D SLACK '88
10 FOR X=336 TO 388
20 READ B:POKE X,C=C+B:NEXT
30 IF C<>6630 THEN PRINT "ERROR":END
40 PRINT "UNLIMITED LIVES DURING
WALK ABOUT Y/N"
50 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N"
THEN 50
60 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 367,173
70 PRINT:PRINT "IMMUNITY DURING
SPACE WALK Y/N"
80 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N"
THEN 80
90 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 372,176:POKE
377,144:GOTO 130
100 PRINT:PRINT "UNLIMITED LIVES
DURING SPACE BATTLE Y/N"
110 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N"
THEN 110
120 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 382,173
130 PRINT:PRINT "INSERT TAPE":SYS 336
140 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 97
150 DATA 141, 208, 2, 169, 1, 141, 209, 2
160 DATA 96, 169, 110, 141, 121, 160, 169, 1
170 DATA 141, 122, 160, 76, 0, 160, 169, 206
180 DATA 141, 196, 54, 169, 144, 141, 61,
143
190 DATA 169, 176, 141, 66, 143, 169, 206,
141
200 DATA 174, 144, 76, 0, 128
```

You may find it worth your while saving this listing to tape for later use. It is a little on the long side, and you don't want to have to keep typing it in every time you want to use it, now do you?

Thanks to D. Slack of Maidstone in Kent for all of the above.

YOGI BEAR
(Piranha)

Type in this listing, RUN it, then follow the on-screen prompts to LOAD the game with infinite lives.

```
1 REM YOGI BEAR CHEAT (c) HM PUGH
1988
2 FOR X=320 TO 353:READ Y:C=C+Y:
POKE X,Y:NEXT
3 IF C=3081 THEN POKE 157,128:SYS 320
4 PRINT "DATA ERROR"
5 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 79, 141, 212, 2, 206,
213, 2, 96
6 DATA 72, 77, 80, 169, 92, 141, 82, 2, 169, 1,
141, 83
7 DATA 2, 76, 0, 2, 206, 78, 25, 76, 16, 8
```

SIDEWIZE
(Firebird)

Crumbs — a game which escaped the reviewing net . . . Ah well, here's infinite lives for both players. Type in this listing. RUN it, etcetera . . .

```
1 REM SIDEWIZE CHEAT (C) HM PUGH 1988
2 FOR X=271 TO 298:READ Y:C=C+Y:
POKE X,Y:NEXT
3 IF C=2920 THEN POKE 157,128:SYS 271
```

```
4 PRINT "DATA ERROR"
5 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 32, 141, 155, 3, 169,
1, 141, 157, 3, 96
6 DATA 72, 77, 80, 141, 32, 208, 72, 169, 224,
141, 24, 50, 104, 96
```

DELTA
(Thalamus)

Yes, there have been other listings. But this one's the shortest yet, AND it gives you infinite use of weapons as well as infinite lives. So there. Type it in, RUN it and . . . well, you should know the rest.

```
1 REM IMPROVED DELTA CHEAT (C) HM
PUGH '87
2 FOR X=528 TO 573:READ Y:C=C+Y:
POKE X,Y:NEXT
3 IF C=4603 THEN POKE 157,128:SYS 528
4 DATA 169, 29, 141, 40, 3, 169, 2, 141, 41, 3,
32, 86, 245, 169, 6, 141
5 DATA 206, 1, 96, 72, 77, 80, 169, 51, 141,
79, 183, 169, 2, 141, 80, 183
6 DATA 76, 235, 2, 169, 173, 141, 138, 65,
206, 137, 14, 76, 16, 8
7 DATA PRINT "DATA ERROR"
```

GARFIELD
(The Edge)

Load the game and when it RUNs, reset the 64. Now enter the following POKEs . . .

POKE 25370,173 (RETURN)
Infinite lives.
POKE 25389,173 (RETURN)
Garfield will always stay awake.
SYS 24320 (RETURN) to restart.

HM Pugh, Holywell, Clwyd

COMBAT SCHOOL
(Imagine)

Ah, here it is — the listing that went AWOL last issue. Once you've typed it in, RUN it and followed the on-screen prompts to load the game, use the SHIFT lock to stop the timer at any time. Pats on the backs go to Tim Fraser and his brother Ian. Pat pat.

```
0 REM COMBAT SCHOOL HACK (c) TIM
AND IAN FRASER '88
1 PRINT CHR$(147)TAB(13)"CHEAT
ACTIVE"
10 FOR I=12288 TO 12387:READ A:POKE
I,A
11 C=C+A:NEXT
12 FOR I=49152 TO 49171:READ X:POKE
I,X
13 C=C+X:NEXT
14 IF C<>13252 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!":END
15 SYS 49155
16 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 192, 141, 237, 3
17 DATA 76, 167, 2, 169, 32, 141, 120, 3
18 DATA 169, 157, 141, 121, 3, 169, 1, 141
19 DATA 122, 3, 76, 0, 8, 173, 13, 220
20 DATA 169, 171, 141, 122, 1, 169, 1, 141
21 DATA 123, 1, 96, 169, 184, 141, 73, 48
22 DATA 169, 1, 141, 74, 48, 76, 216, 5
23 DATA 169, 253, 141, 0, 220, 173, 1, 220
24 DATA 73, 255, 41, 128, 240, 15, 173, 172
25 DATA 1, 141, 8, 220, 173, 173, 1, 141
26 DATA 8, 221, 76, 79, 48, 173, 8, 220
27 DATA 141, 172, 1, 173, 8, 221, 141, 173
28 DATA 1, 76, 79, 48, 76, 139, 1, 162, 99
29 DATA 189, 0, 48, 157, 128, 1, 202, 16
30 DATA 247, 162, 255, 154, 76, 128, 1
```

ARKANOID: REVENGE OF DOH
(Imagine)

POKEs already!? Yes, courtesy of the quick, slick Ruislip duo, Tim and Ian Fraser, we have here a listing that will give you infinite lives AND a level advance feature. Type it in, RUN it and follow the on-screen prompts to load the game.

```
0 REM ARKANOID II (c) TIM AND IAN
FRASER
1 PRINT CHR$(147)
2 PRINT CHR$"SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE":PRINT:PRINT"SYS 2816 TO START"
3 FOR I=2816 TO 2920:READ
X:A=A+X:POKE I,X
4 NEXT
5 IF A<>11967 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!"
6 DATA 162, 87, 189, 17, 11, 157, 128, 1, 202
7 DATA 16, 247, 162, 255, 154, 76, 128, 1
8 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 144, 141, 240, 3
9 DATA 169, 1, 141, 245, 3, 76, 167, 2
10 DATA 169, 32, 141, 84, 3, 169, 162, 141
11 DATA 85, 3, 169, 1, 141, 86, 3, 76
12 DATA 0, 8, 169, 176, 141, 115, 1, 169
13 DATA 1, 141, 116, 1, 173, 18, 208, 96
14 DATA 169, 173, 141, 255, 9, 162, 7, 189
15 DATA 205, 1, 157, 0, 61, 202, 16, 247
16 DATA 162, 0, 160, 61, 142, 250, 255, 140
17 DATA 251, 255, 76, 212, 6, 169, 255, 141
18 DATA 67, 3, 76, 88, 55, 76, 212, 6
```

A tap of the RESTORE key will advance a level.

MORPHEUS
(Rainbird/Graftgold)

Ok, so it, hasn't been out that long. And yes, using this listing could seriously spoil your enjoyment of the game. So give it a miss eh? However if you've nothing better to do, type this in, RUN it and follow the on-screen prompts to load *Morpeus* with infinite energy and LOADSA MONEY!

```
10 PRINT CHR$(147): REM BY ANDY GRIFO
20 FOR A=1024 TO 1095: READ B: POKE A,
B: NEXT
30 SYS 1024
40 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 32,
141
50 DATA 117, 3, 169, 24, 141, 118, 3, 169, 4
60 DATA 141, 119, 3, 76, 167, 2, 169, 41, 141
70 DATA 143, 8, 169, 4, 141, 144, 8, 238, 32,
208
80 DATA 173, 13, 220, 96, 169, 54, 141, 91, 8
90 DATA 169, 4, 141, 92, 8, 76, 16, 8, 169, 0
100 DATA 141, 48, 15, 169, 173, 141, 122, 66,
169
110 DATA 28, 141, 219, 70, 76, 16, 8
```

Thanks to Andy Grifo of Walkden near Manchester. Apologies to Andy B . . .

SCUMBALL
(Bulldog)

The choice is yours: unlimited lives during the loader and/or unlimited lives during the game. Just type in this listing and RUN it. Now follow the on-screen prompts to load the game with the necessary changes. But beware! Don't go down from location 118 'cos you'll get stuck.

```
0 REM (c) D SLACK '88
10 FOR X=400 TO 460
20 READ B:POKE X,B:C=C+B:NEXT
30 IF C<>6101 THEN PRINT "ERROR":END
40 PRINT "UNLIMITED LIVES IN LOADER
(Y/N)"
50 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N"
THEN 50
60 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 433,173
70 PRINT:PRINT "UNLIMITED LIVES IN
GAME (Y/N)"
80 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N"
THEN 80
90 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 454,0
100 PRINT:PRINT "INSERT TAPE":SYS 400
110 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 176
120 DATA 141, 68, 3, 169, 1, 141, 69, 3
130 DATA 141, 42, 4, 169, 184, 141, 41, 4
140 DATA 169, 185, 141, 97, 3, 76, 64, 3
150 DATA 169, 206, 141, 122, 254, 76, 0, 248
160 DATA 169, 197, 141, 59, 9, 169, 1, 141
170 DATA 60, 9, 76, 20, 8, 169, 1, 141
180 DATA 253, 50, 76, 16, 8
```

(Don't forget to save this listing for future use.)

STEALTH FIGHTER



Sim supremo Wild Bill Stealey dons his trainer's hat again for this month. After his successful player's guide to Gunship *comes more expert guidance to playing* Microprose's *brilliant jetsim* Project Stealth Fighter. *If you fancy yourself as Top Gun, read on . . .*

Project Stealth Fighter

Under a number of subheads we've identified key areas that you should pay particular attention to in order to become a successful Stealth Fighter pilot.

This is not a cheat sheet because we do not believe in cheating: the only way to do something is 'The Right Way'. However, we do realise that *Project: Stealth Fighter* is probably the most sophisticated and challenging flight stimulation available today, and for that reason giving a few tips and pointers to look out for when flying Stealth is good thinking.

There are hundreds of hours of flying time in *Project: Stealth Fighter* — with these tips you will be up and at 'em even faster.

Preparation

Familiarise yourself with firing all types of weaponry and decide which of the various types you find best to use.

Always make sure you have a bit of spare fuel for using on maximum thrust in a dogfight or escaping after hitting your target. A margin of about 1500 lbs of fuel should cover most emergencies.

Learn to use the cannon; that way you only have to take on one set of Sidewinders which will leave space to take 'Mavericks' (the best air to ground weapon) and allow you to hit enemy radar stations or missile launchers.

It is best to fly short missions (under 8500 lbs of fuel) at low altitude and longer missions (over 8500 lbs of fuel) at high altitude as explained in the manual.

The high altitude flying in long range missions should be coupled with 'threading the needle'; to do this use the scale in the manual and clear the enemy weapon range onto your maps. Doing this will get you a much higher Stealth rating.

Using Jammers

Only use your jammers, not the flares, to confuse incoming missiles unless the missile is launched within 12 kilometres, in which case use a flare.

If you see a missile launched signal on to your warning panel, change your threat display to 25 kilometres and turn the jammers on when the missile gets close. This way the jammers will recharge very quickly.

The reason for saving the flares is that if you get hit the jammers are nearly always the first to go, so it is best to save the flares for just that emergency.

Scoring

The higher the reality level the more points you score in a mission, so obviously you must be looking to fly in Europe with an ULTIMATE rating. With these settings you can fly Stealth in easy landings mode and still retain the ultimate rating. This will mean that, should you be hit and suffer flight control damage, you will still have a good chance of pulling off a safe landing. If you can land the F-19 with heavy flight damage in realistic landing mode you are one hell of a pilot!

Medals

Medals are gained by high scoring in a mission. If you don't get your prime target then it doesn't matter how much else you hit, you'll still get a poor score and be alone at the bar in the Officers' Club after your mission.

Don't expect to get medals every time you fly — it gets harder as you go along. For example, if you get 1400 points in one mission you might get a Bronze Star; the next time you might get just an airman's medal and the next you may not get anything at all.

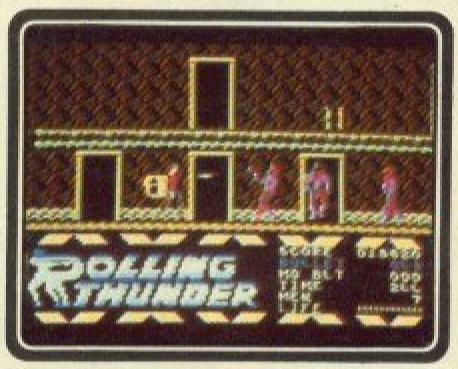
Getting the Congressional Medal of Honor

There's no real guaranteed way to get this medal but the best chance lies with the ultimate mission in Central Europe. It's a surgical strike to hit the HQ and you will need to use all your Stealth ability, which will take many hours of flying time.

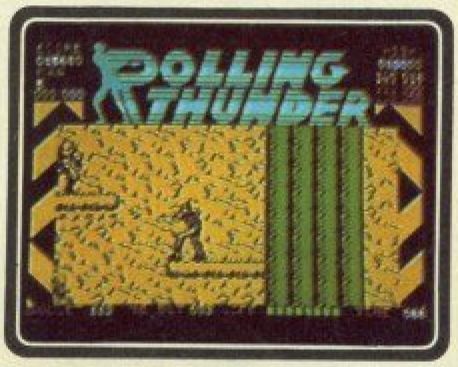
If you do succeed in this mission and you are awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor, let us know and we will send you a special Certificate, awarded only to the elite flight stimulation experts.







Screen shot from CBM version.



Screen shot from Spectrum version.



Screen shot from Amstrad version.

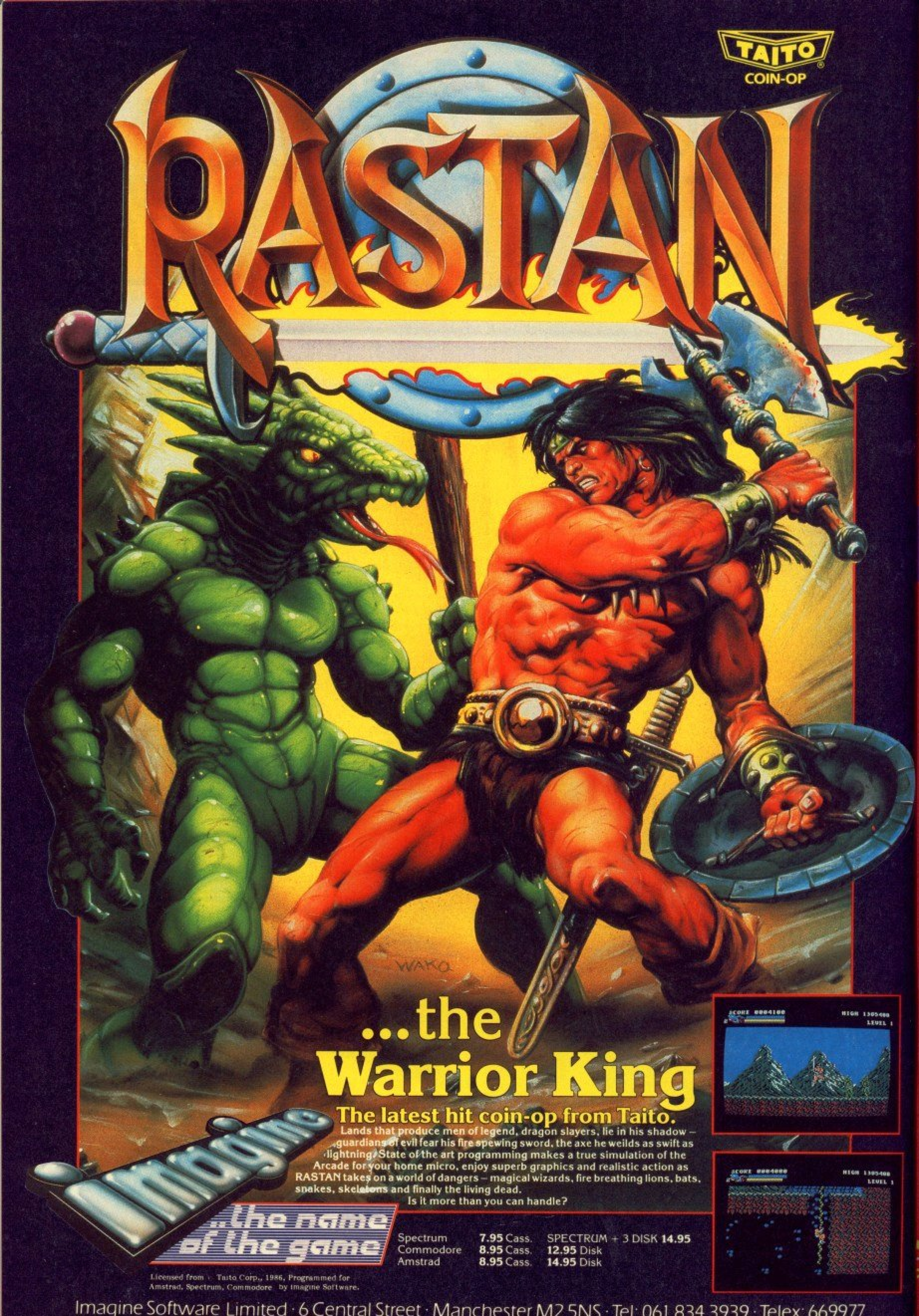


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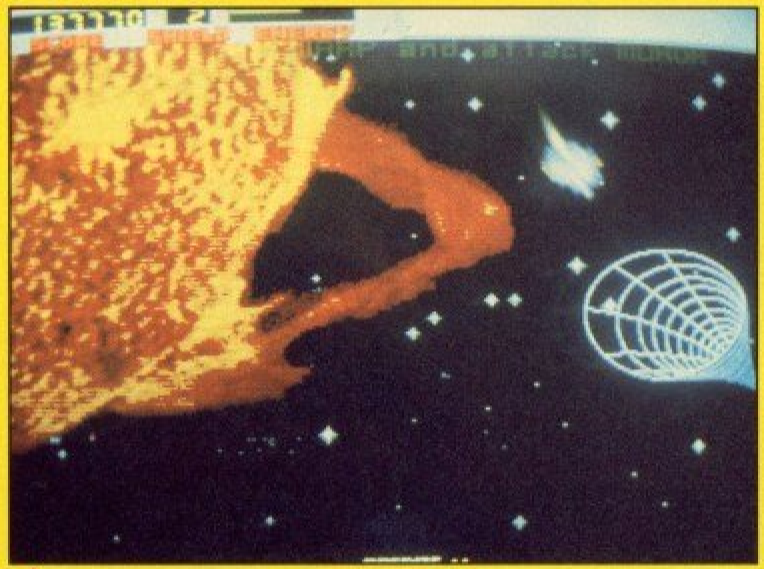
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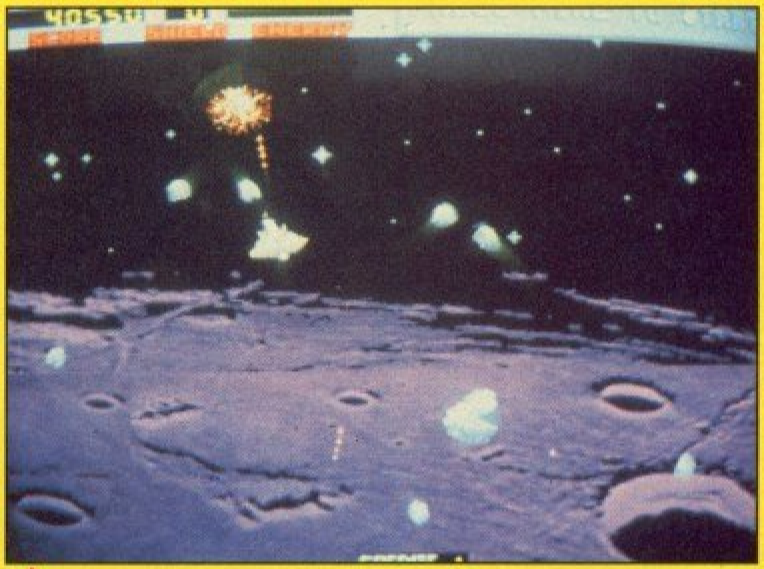
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ARCADES



Sector cleared, you beam into the warp tunnel.



Plenty o' rocks to be rubblised.

ATARI
3×10p

BLASTEROIDS

I don't know if there's any connection between the current revival of flares, floppy hats and the Philly Sound and the recent spate of coin-op classic upgrades, but, hell, there's a lot of it about. We've already had *Arkanoid* (derived from *Breakout*), *Pacmania (Pacman)* and a whole host of *Space Invader* clones. So really it was only a matter of time before someone — come on down, Atari — decided to do the same for that other '70's fave, *Asteroids*.

For those of you too young or unhip to remember, *Asteroids* pitted you, in control of a small, line-drawn spaceship, against a host of boulders which floated gently about the inky-black screen. Your craft could move all over the screen using a thrust button — if you went over the edge, the "wraparound effect" meant that you'd simply appear on the far side — and you had to control left and right rotate buttons so as to point your spaceship in the direction in which you wished to move or fire.

There were also occasional flying saucers who'd coast across the screen firing at you.

Blasteroids takes the basic game concept and enhances it in a whole series of different ways.

For a start, there's your ship. Where the original offered you no alternative to your rather feeble little wedge-craft, *Blasteroids* allows you to choose from three different shapes of ship: the largest, and slowest-moving, has least fire-power but heaviest armour, the next one down moves reasonably well, is resilient and packs the greatest shooting punch, and the smallest is nippy but weak and easily destroyed. There's a transform button provided which enables you to switch from one shape to another in mid-play.

There are four different difficulty levels, or galaxies, to choose from, ranging from easy to expert, and each galaxy has a number of different sectors which must be completed. If you manage to make your way through the nine sectors that make up the first level you move on to try the next.

And just what is it that you've got to destroy? Well, asteroids, of course, plenty of 'em, and in a far greater variety of characteristics than the original's bog standard lumps of space-rock. Some of 'em, red in colour, leave behind a power crystal which helps restore your flagging energy (you've got an energy counter, by the by, rather than instant destructability, and when it hits the bottom, it's another 30p please, mate, or let the next person on). Other bright blue ones start off small but soon swell up. Once zapped they do not disappear but hang suspended in space for you to bump into and diminish your precious energy with — the earlier you shoot 'em, the smaller their frozen corpses are, and the easier to avoid. Then there are the ordinary-but-never-to-be-underrated asteroids of the old school, which fragment when blasted and can cause you plenty of trouble, thanks very much. There are even some nasty asteroids which, by some form of interstellar magnetism, are actually attracted towards you.

Floating in and out of this space quarry are alien ships, most of which take potshots at you. But whereas in *Asteroids* destroying these tiresome aggressors merely brought you honour, glory and bonus points, zapping *Blasteroids'* mechanised nasties can give you the added thrills of hardware to help you in your quest for survival. There are boosters (these increase your thrust speed), crystal magnets (draw the power crystals to you, thereby saving you the bother of having to go and fetch 'em, added firepower, protective shields (very useful — these diminish the effects of collisions or hits), extra energy tanks, cloaking devices (to fool the enemy) and ripstars (smart-bombs).

At the end of each level you encounter the horrible, crater-encrusted Mukor, who, with missiles streaming out of his peripheral orifices and Ming-The-Merciless type comments ("Prepare to meet your end, puny mortal", etc) from his mouth, resembles nothing so much as an enormous malevolent snot-ball. You have to try to blast all the death-spitting craters off his Humpty-Dumpty form before delivering the killer blow. He reappears at the end of each level, miraculously reincarnated with even more craters than before.

Blasteroids' controls are a considerable improvement on the original's: apart from fire, thrust and transform buttons, rotation is controlled by a joystick rather than those fiddly buttons.

The graphics are O.K., though perhaps not as startling an improvement as, say, those on *Pacmania*. But with all the playability of the original — and plenty of new variations — *Blasteroids* is well worth a flutter.

Nick Kelly



Blasteroids — '70s playability, '80's feel.



Mukor takes on the "human slime".

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	7
TOUGHNESS	6
ENDURANCE	7
VALUE	7
OVERALL	7

CHELNOV

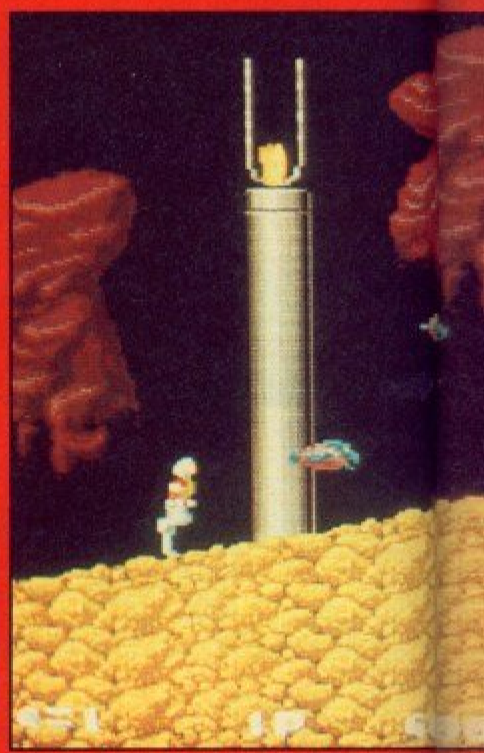
DATA EAST (2 × 10p)

Subtitled "Atomic Runner", Data East's latest shoot 'em up sensation finds you guiding an athletic Russian through a fantastical underground network of tunnels, which lead, according to the maps flashed up at the end of each level, to the Statue of Liberty. Whether the ultimate intention is for our hero Chelnov to destroy the West's symbol of freedom or, post-*Glasnost*, to embrace her, isn't clear. You'll just have to finish the game yourselves to find out — good luck!

Chelnov at first glance bears some resemblance to the horizontal phase of the recently converted *Gryzor:* the action takes place on two planes with the joystick controlling your running onscreen characters' angle of fire as well as forwards and backwards motion. A jump button sends you somersaulting through the air.

But where Lance Gryzor sprinted through a rather dull jungle 'n' river scene being shot at by some very dreary — if quite efficiently deadly — robotroops and gun emplacements, comrade Chelnov is faced with a dazzling array of ground-based and airborne nasties against a lavish undulating subterranean background which features doric columns topped with flame, crumbling bridges over fiery chasms and enormous disembodied arms reaching out of the earth to clutch him. It's a fairly daunting prospect for our hero but there's no turning back, or even hesitating. The screen itself scrolls continuously behind you, and you're going to have to face those perils sooner rather than later.

Apart from the shootin' and jumpin' buttons, Chelnov also possesses a turn button which allows you to turn around and fire behind you — this feature,



Russian into big trouble (groan — Ed.)

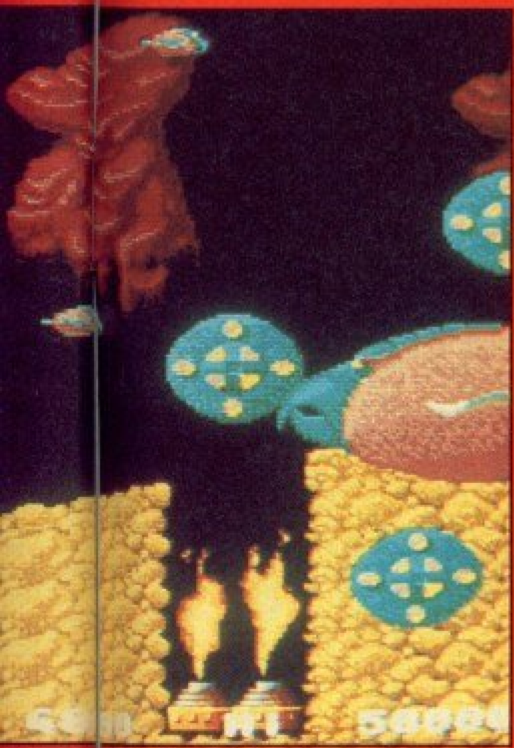


Hook 'n' chain 'em, comrade.

Boulder baskets and mutant maggots.



ADES



combined with the game's relentless left-right scrolling have the effect of allowing Chelnov to run backwards, strafing the enemy behind him.

This hero of the Soviet Union starts out with a standard shooter but there are plenty of icons to be picked up by shooting out certain winged beasties, fire sources on tops of pillars, etc., some of which give you a variety of fearsome weapons to make life in the underworld a little more survivable, others enhancing your weapon's power and your own ability to jump. There are flame-throwers, fireballs, hook-and-chains, heat-seeking missiles and fistfuls of boomerangs to name but a few collectable items. And you will certainly need them.

Apart from the hobgoblin figures which rush at you on the ground and the oversize moth creatures which fly above you in clusters, there are giant half-armoured ant-creatures, the aforementioned disembodied clutching arms and occasional gigantic super-monsters who require full minutes of shooting and avoiding if you're to defeat them. You also have to take out certain obstacles before you've scrolled into them, and you can even demolish platforms and ledges along with the nasties on top of 'em.

The action gets extremely fast and furious and it will take all your sleight of hand to keep yourself facing in the right direction, taking out your opponents, timing your leaps and avoiding missiles. Luckily your jump control allows you to adjust your point of landing so, assuming your attackers don't unduly put you off, you shouldn't find the various chasms, firepits and broken bridge spans insurmountable.

The soundtrack owes something to *Rastan saga*, and so, it must be said, does the feel of the game. But *Chelnov*'s more sophisticated gameplay gives it an edge which the broadsword beat 'em up just doesn't quite possess.

Currently on release in Japan, and on limited site-test here, *Chelnov* is already proving a most popular product. I had to return several times to my local arcade before I managed to beat the crowds of onlookers and competitors and get on there myself. Expect to see this all over the island by summer.
Nick Kelly.

GRAPHICS:	8
SOUND:	7
TOUGHNESS:	8
ENDURANCE:	8
VALUE:	8
OVERALL:	8



Repel the capitalist lizard-skele-troops.

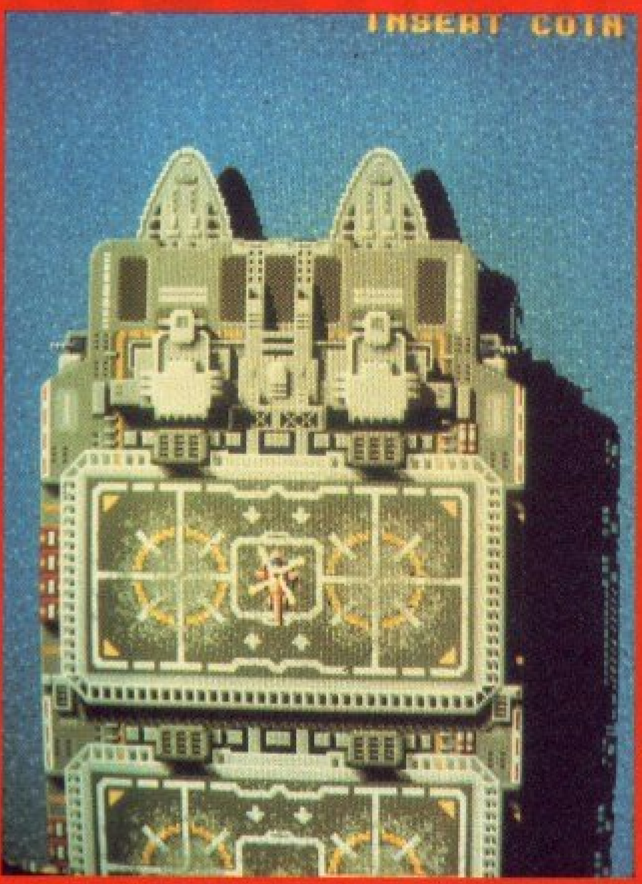
Aaagh . . . this must be Wall Street!



ADES


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ARCADES



Start those rotars.

TWIN COBRA

TAITO
2×10p

Twin Cobra doesn't take too many chances. Vertically-scrolling, aerial shoot 'em up action is what you get here, with most of the details not seventeen trillion miles away from last year's Taito stablemate, *Flying Shark*.

True, *Twin Cobra* features helicopters rather than bi-planes, and the "twin" aspect of its name refers to the fact that you can fly in tandem with a mate (not possible in *Flying Shark*). Nevertheless, one is left with the more than vague sensation of having been here before.

To fill you in, you take off from your aircraft carrier and proceed towards the enemy shore, taking out the braces of choppers who come for you. Once over land, you've got to deal with ground-to-air missiles and tanks too, plus occasional super-choppers. The ground based enemies generally need a couple of hits to destroy them, and the super-choppers considerably more. These latter opponents dodge about spraying showers of shells at you, but if you manage to pump them with enough lead they eventually disintegrate, leaving behind a (moving) icon with either "S" or "B" marked on it. Catch this and your weaponry will be enhanced.

Your weapons are basically two fold — unlimited heavy-machine guns and a very limited number of bombs (these destroy all the enemy craft in your immediate vicinity, though not everything on the screen). Each time you manage to pick up an "S" your fire-power is enhanced, initially simply doubling but latterly by giving you completely new kinds of cannon. Each time you score a "B", you acquire one more bomb.

There are also small supply huts and bunkers to take out, which leave "P" icons in their wake for you to collect, but what, if anything, these give you (apart from extra points, of course), I couldn't work out.

Life as a cobra pilot may have much of the same flavour as that of a *Flying Shark*-man, but it did seem a wee bit easier. The fact that the tanks and helis opposing you aren't camouflaged and therefore don't completely blend in with their backgrounds made survive-and-thrival a much happier proposition. And, though the monster tank/ship which comes at the end of each level is no easy proposition, I personally didn't find it quite as tough a nut to crack as the fire-spitting horrors encountered at *Flying Shark*'s nether regions.

Twin Cobra passes most of the tests in terms of graphics, sound and playability. It's smart, entertaining — and, of course, utterly predictable. If coin-ops were records, this would be a Stock Aitken Waterman release — slick, user-friendly and pretty much the same as the last one.

Nick Kelly

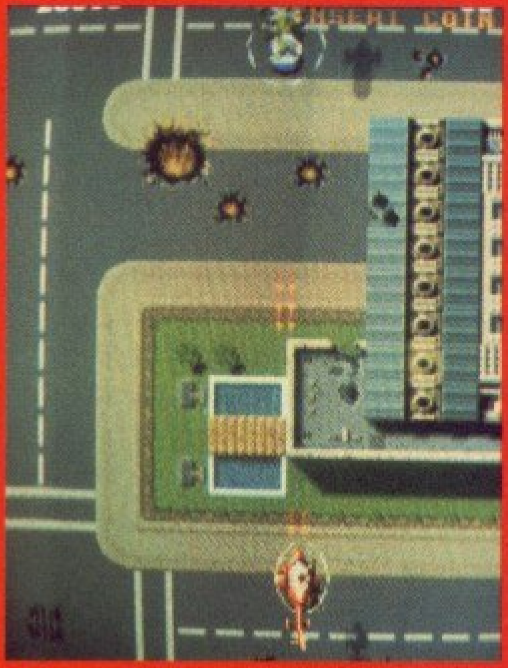
SOUND	6
GRAPHICS	6
TOUGHNESS	5
ENDURANCE	6
VALUE	6
OVERALL	6

More fire-power comes in handy.



Cruising with your twin.





Take out the big guy to pick up "extras"..

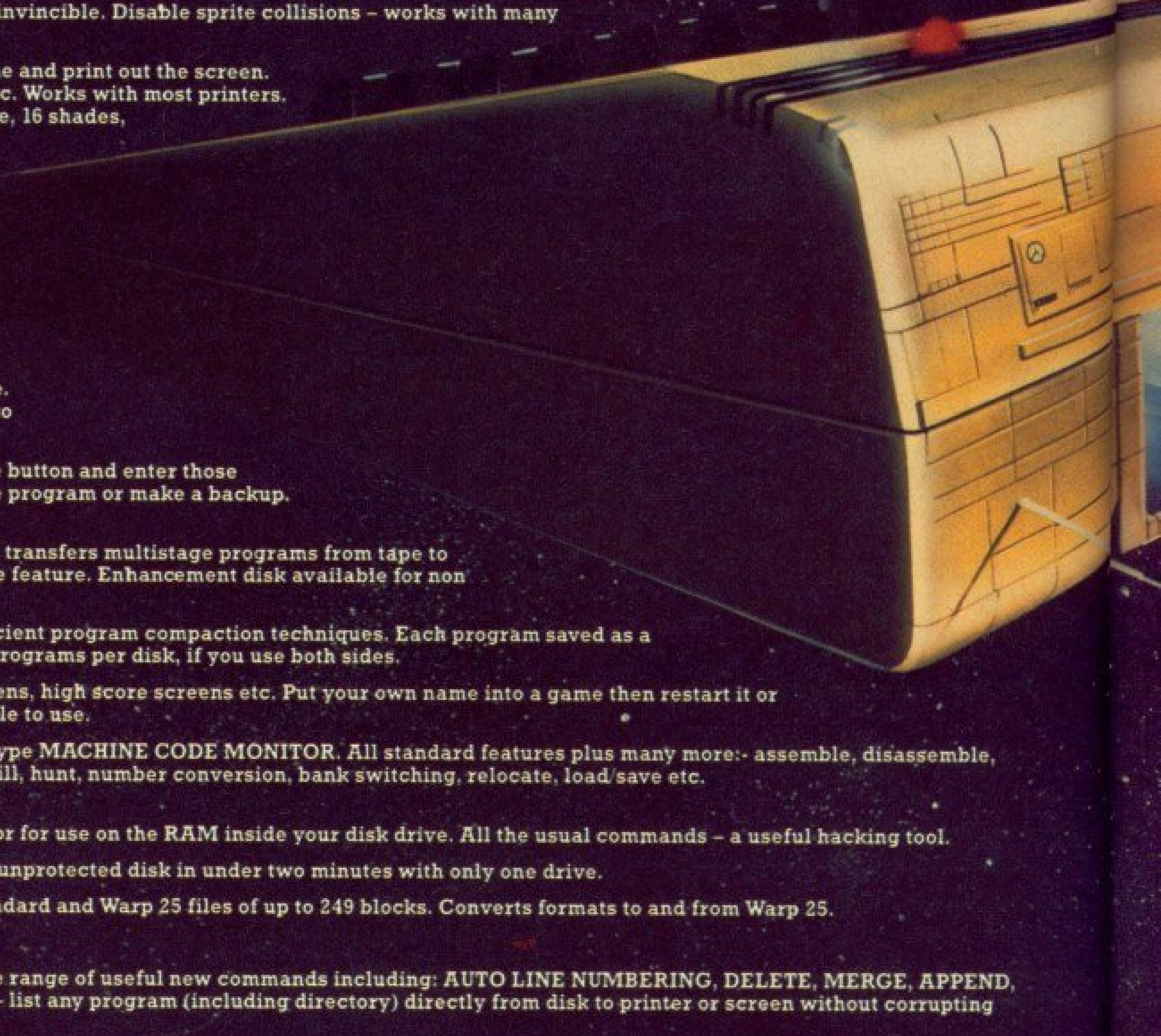
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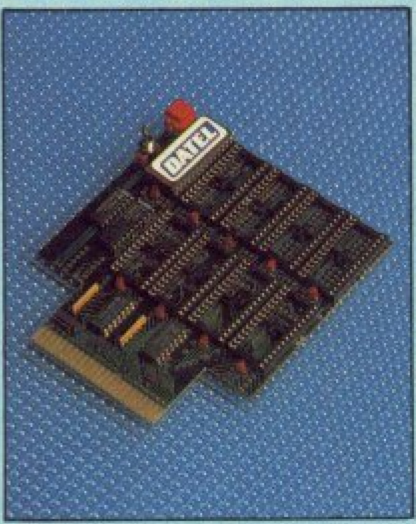
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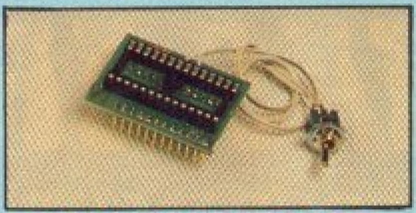
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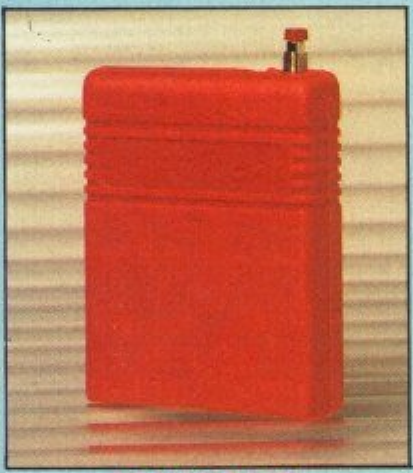
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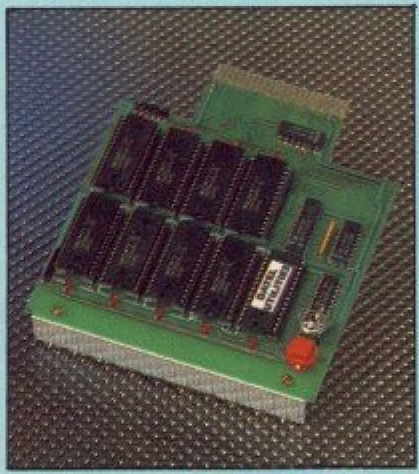
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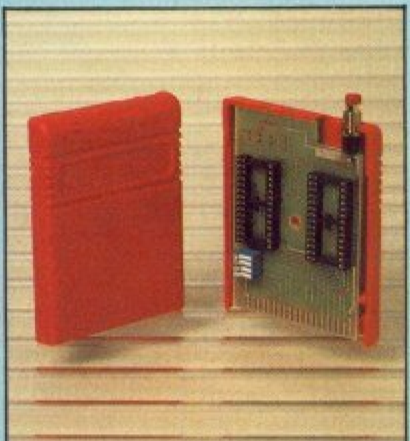
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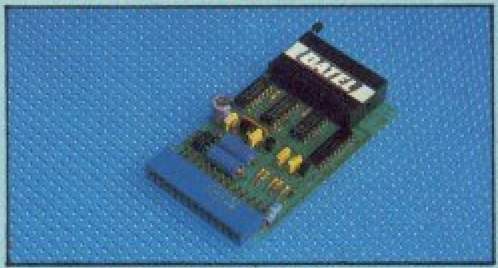
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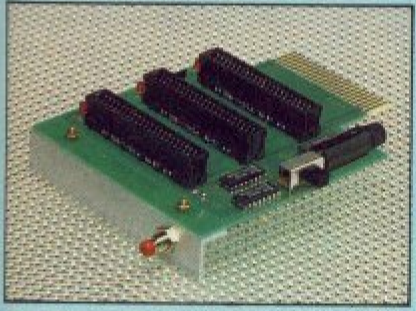


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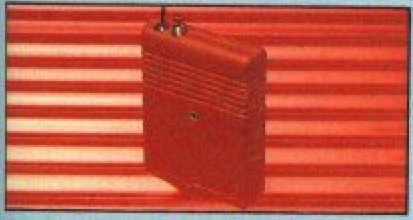
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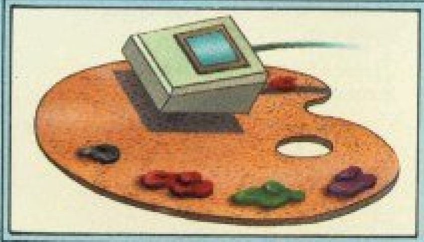


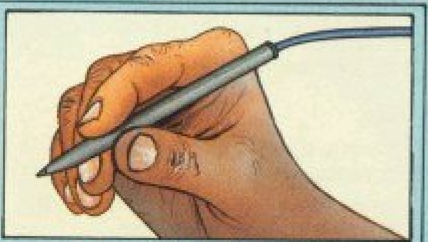
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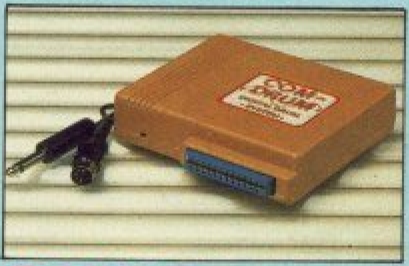
- Robotek 64 is a comprehensive hardware/software package which enables you to connect your 64/128 to the outside world.
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including hardware/software/mic etc. (State tape or disk)



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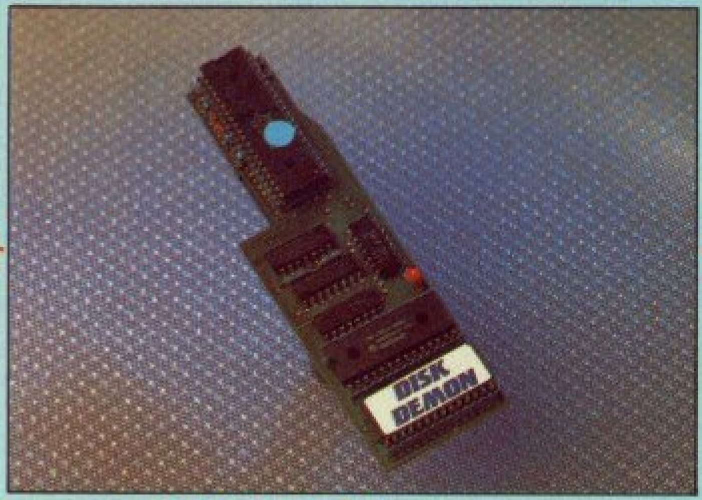
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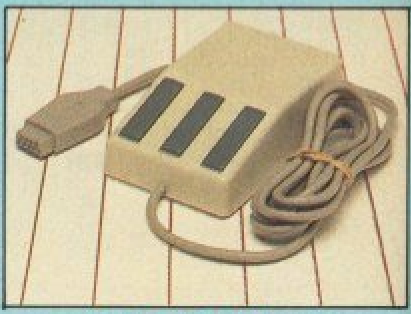


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- Diskmate II is

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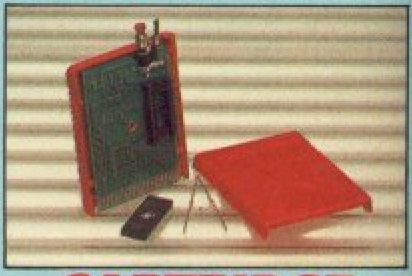
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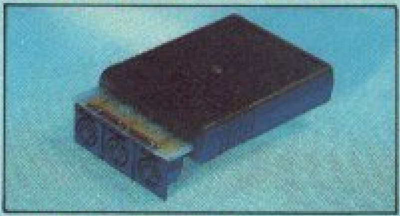
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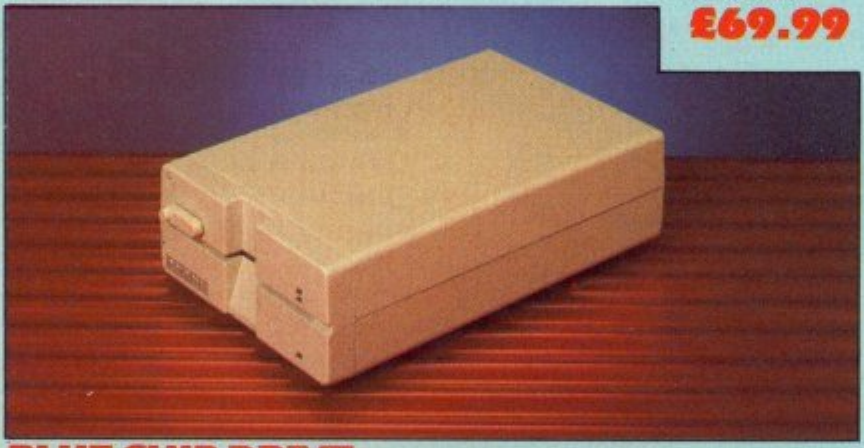


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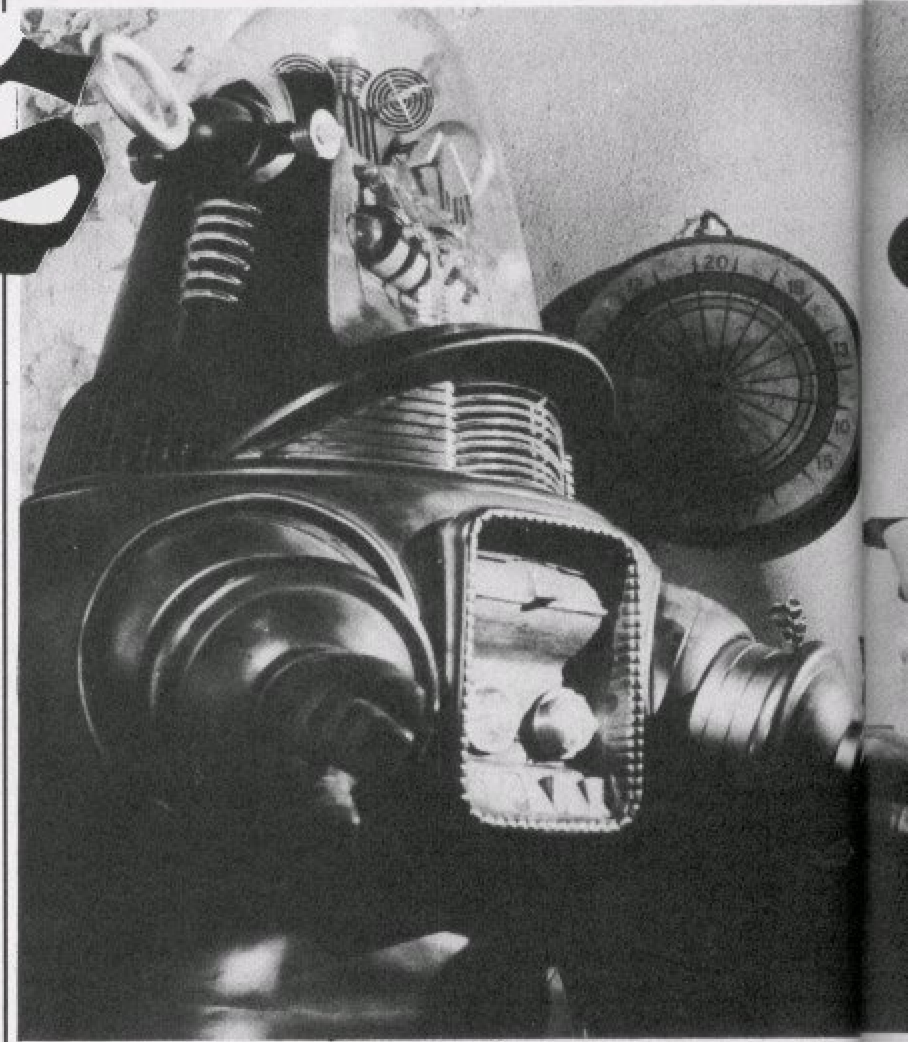
PIRACY!

NEXT MONTH

"If the software business isn't careful it could be scuppered by dodgy dealers and crafty cowboys flogging bent games." That's the view of one member of the industry and next month Commodore user blows the lid off the piracy business that threatens to strangle the 16 bit market at birth. We investigate inter industry thieving, look at the legal angles and talk to the crackers and demo gangs in the UK and Germany. Elsewhere in the issue we preview more top 64 and Amiga games and review *Impossible Mission*, *Samurai Warrior*, *Road Warrior* and anything we can get our hands on. There'll be the usual supply of hot tips via Gary Penn and help from Tommy, plus the best Amiga coverage money can buy. Catch ya on the 26th April!



Tommy's Tips



Daddy, when I grow up will I have a joystick port like yours?

Drive switch reply

With reference to your tip headed 'BAD MEMORY' as published in the January issue of Commodore User: Marc Loyeau of Witney, Oxon, wrote to you asking about a 'box' or 'connector' that he could fit to his Amiga's second drive that would enable him to switch it in or out of the system.

Our company is in the process of producing various add-ons for the Amiga and the drive switch is one product we are considering. As an Amiga user for over twelve months we have found it almost essential to be able to switch out the second drive and have fitted a switch for this purpose.

There is a lot of software that will not run on a 512k machine with a drive connected. This is not just a problem for 256k Amiga owners (if there are any!) but applies to all Amigas. Some software just does not want a second drive connected.

If Mr Loyeau would like to contact us we will be able to supply him with a suitable switched connector. Current advert in your magazine carries our address.
Mr S. P. Jaikens,
Turbotronic,
Halifax

Which all goes to show the power of Tommy's Tips; it brings out the best in our readers including the commercial companies. Well done, Turbotronics and I expect you will get inundated with enquiries.

Beginner

I have a C64 and I am a new boy to this computer lark so please don't take the micky if my questions seem elementary. I have three questions to ask and I'm sure you will be able to help.
1. Is it possible to increase the memory of a C64?
2. I have a music expansion system, can I play this through a guitar/keyboard amplifier with a standard jack plug input — if so how?
3. The term 'back up' — is this when you load a commercial program onto a blank cassette with the aid of a cartridge — if so, how simple is it to do?

Thanks for any help you are able to give.
Mike Graves,
Milton Keynes

First of all, no apologies are necessary; we all had to learn somewhere and that is what Tommy's Tips is all about. I'm sure the following answers will be of interest to more than just yourself.

I'm afraid that, at present anyway, you cannot expand the C64 beyond the in-built 64 kbytes of RAM, at least not in the sense of having more RAM available at the same time. What IS available however, is a battery-backed RAM cartridge from **Trilogic,** called RAMBOX. There are certain limitations in that it can only be used in conjunction with the Expert utility/copy cartridge, but allows you to hold several programs (depending on size of course!) in memory at once and call up the one you want (alternatively, developers can work on different versions without changing the original copy). The 64k RAMBOX costs £49-95 and the EXPERT costs £29-99. Contact Trilogic on **0274 691115.**

As for music output, this comes from pins 2 (Gnd) and 3 (Audio Out) on the Audio/Video port at the rear of the computer. These will need to be fed into a suitable input socket with the correct impedance (ie: LINE input, not a MIC input) and can then be amplified in the normal way. If you get a lot of noise and a low signal level then the impedance of the input is wrong. Always use a screened cable with the 'Gnd' (Pin 2) connected to the screen.

The term 'Back-up' is a general term for the process of taking a safety copy of either a program or data so that if one copy gets corrupted, you can take another back-up from the remaining one and continue working. When you take a back-up of a program you should always use the copy and keep the original in a safe place. Using something like the Expert cartridge makes backing-up most programs extremely straightforward since it will allow back-ups to be created from both tape and disks onto either type of medium.

Cartridges

Please could you tell me if any disk drive (Commodore compatible) would work with my C128. So far, I've been led into believing that only the 1571 disk drive is C128 compatible, or can the 1541, 1541C or even better the Excelerator + work on it?

Also is it possible to enter monitor in C64 mode on the C128? When I press RUN/STOP + RESET switch I go back into C128 mode when playing a game in C64 mode.

Will back-up cartriges work in C128 mode, and which is the best?

Please could you tell me which one you would recommend, and whether they're worth getting when using tape. Why is it that companies have to keep upgrading them, eg: Freezemachine V, Action Replay IV? Is this because they're so rubbish to start with they keep having to upgrade them? If I buy one will it mean I'll have to upgrade it every two months or so.
Damian Piesse,
Aberdeen

There are only two drives which are specifically designed to work with the CBM 128; the 1570, which is a single sided drive and the 1571, which is a double sided drive. Both of these drives will give fast response times when using the 128 (as opposed to 64 mode). However, you can use any of the standard Commodore drives such as the 1541, 1541C and the Excelerator+, but the penalty with all of these is that you get the same slow speed when using the 128 mode as with the 64 mode. Even using a parallel DOS (disk operating system) will not solve the problem in full because with most of them you have to specify EITHER 64 mode or 128 mode when you order (since only one ROM KERNAL is supplied), so only one mode will be speeded up. Next, you cannot use the 128 monitor to access the 64's memory as the RAM configuration is completely different between the two modes.

If you want to get back into the 64 mode when doing a reset, hold down the C= key at the same time. Finally, most back-up cartridges will only work in 64 mode, not 128 mode. This is because the vast majority of use is for games and there are very few games which have been written to run only in 128 mode (in fact I'm not sure there are any at all!).

As to why they have to be constantly upgraded, they are trying to keep up with the software houses who are always trying to find ways to protect their software against these cartridges! It's a bit like military defence; as soon as



side discovers a defence against the existing weapons, the other side invents a new weapon to overcome the defence, etc, etc.

Loader

I own a Commodore 64 and have problems loading specific programs, all multi-loaders. Firstly *Last Ninja*; I've had 3 different cassettes of this and none of them load properly. On the second cassette I had I got to Level 5 once but that was it.

I've also had 4 different game cassettes of *Defender of the Crown* (none of them work) and on *Pirates* by Microprose I don't get anything on how I ended my days after I've played the game. All these games would be good games but they don't work. Has anyone else had these problems or am I just extremely unluckly.

I've sent off for 'Load-it', a Datacorder that hopefully helps loading. But could you tell me as I'm a new Commodore 64 owner — is it normal for games not to load like this?

Dorian Oliver, London SE6

P.S. Should I write to the software companies involved and send the games back to them, even though I got them from the shops.

Games, whether multi-part or not, should load nine times out of ten without any problem. Occasionally, a mains spike or voltage fluctuation can cause a load failure on a long load, but a filter plug will cure these. If you are having problems with virtually all the programs you try to load, then the chances are that your tape heads need re-aligning. The new tape deck should solve the problem, although it is possible to buy head alignment kits which allow you to set the recorder up correctly yourself.

If you really suspect a tape may be faulty, particularly when a program won't load on either yours or a friend's machine, then you should always return it in the first instance to the shop where you bought it. Any good dealer will replace it.

Dictionary

After recently watching the quiz on BBC 1, Masterteam, I would love you to list a program that would be able to work on my Amiga 500. What I want the program to do is when 3 letters are typed into the computer, then the computer would print all the words that start with the first letter and contain the next two letters in that order somewhere in the word, eg if I typed in the letters H,S,E I would like the computer to respond with answers such as hose, house, haste etc . . .

I am quite prepared to type in all of the words in the English language. Is 512k enough memory? I hope it is.

Please give me a printing in your magazine or give me a reply. I am desperate.

Also could you give me more information on Genlock and Digi-view.

Scott Morris, Bristol

Wow, you want to type in all the words in the English language eh? Perhaps I should point out that even for a modest 20,000 word dictionary (for such is what you would be creating) you would need something in the order of 120 kbytes of memory and assuming a speed of 6 words a minute it would take you about 10 days, typing for about 6 hours a day, just to enter the data! It is also assuming you didn't make any mistakes in that time! That certainly wouldn't give you ALL the words in the English language by any stretch of the imagination and about 80,000 words might be getting a bit closer to a practical figure. By far your best bet would be to obtain a word processing program with a large spelling checker dictionary and use that. You would need to find out how the dictionary was stored since virtually all commercial dictionaries rely on text compression techniques to store such a large quantity of text and yet retain fast search times. While I can't give you the program in detail, since it depends on what the source data is, the principle is as follows:

1. Go straight to the part of the file containing the words starting with the first letter.

2. Read in all the words in that section sequentially, carrying out the following for each word in turn.

2A. Use the 'string within string' (INSTR) search to find the position of the *first* occurance of the second letter. If there is no match, ignore it and go onto the next word.

2B. If it *does* match, then search from 'the position of the match + 1' for a match on the second letter. If you find one then print the word, otherwise go onto the next word.

I have to say that interpreted BASIC will be a bit slow for this sort of thing and that a compiled language such as C, or Modula-2 would be far superior in terms of speed of response.

Genlock will allow you to combine a TV picture with the output from your Amiga so that they appear on the screen at the same time; it costs £270 for the A500 version. Digi-view will allow you to capture pictures in either colour or B&W from a suitable video camera for display (and storage) on the Amiga; it costs about £180, but this does not include the camera. Only static images can be captured in colour.

Screen grabber

I have a few problems with my Amiga 500, which I hope you can help me with.

What is the difference between the Commodore A101 disk drive and the Cumana 1 megabyte drive?

Can I buy a utility that can grab high-resolution games screens to be edited on Deluxe paint or to be displayed using slide show software, where can I get it and how much will it cost?

What is the cheapest colour printer available for the Amiga?

I would be very grateful if you can answer my questions.

Neil Safi Willenhall, W. Mids

There are only two real differences between these two drives: the name and the price! As far as the Amiga is concerned the Cumana Drive will function in exactly the same way as the Commodore drive (as will the vast majority of the other 'clone' drives on the market). Note that the 1 Mbyte referred to is the *unformatted* capacity; the *formatted* capacity is still 880 kbytes.

I regret to say that I don't know of any program or utility that will enable you to capture a hi-res screen from an Amiga game and store it on disk. (If anyone out there knows of such a utility, please drop me a line, I'm sure many people would be interested). The cheapest colour printer for the Amiga has to be the OKIMATE 20, at only £229. It has a few disadvantages however, since it uses a four colour transfer ribbon, with each colour following in sequence along the plastic strip that comprises the 'ribbon'. Thus if you only use one colour for anything you still go through the ribbon at one hell of a rate (and it's a once through ribbon as well) and it is also pretty slow. The advantages are price and a surprisingly good colour quality, better than a dot-matrix colour printer such as the Juki 5520.

For general versatility however, I use the Juki since this will give both NLQ printing using a standard black ribbon as well as an adequate colour quality using a 4-colour ribbon, and fully emulates the EPSON JX-80. It is more expensive though, at around £390.

Finally, there is the CANON PJ1080A colour ink-jet printer at around £340 from Precision Software, but although giving good colour graphics it suffers from poor print quality. You will also need a printer driver program for the CANON at around £11 in order to use it with the Amiga.

Monitor

I have a 1901 monitor, and I am planning on getting an Amiga. I am planning on sending my monitor to Trilogic to have it upgraded. I have two questions. Will the monitor be able to display the highest resolution of the Amiga? Also could you tell me whether it will be still possible to get stereo sound?

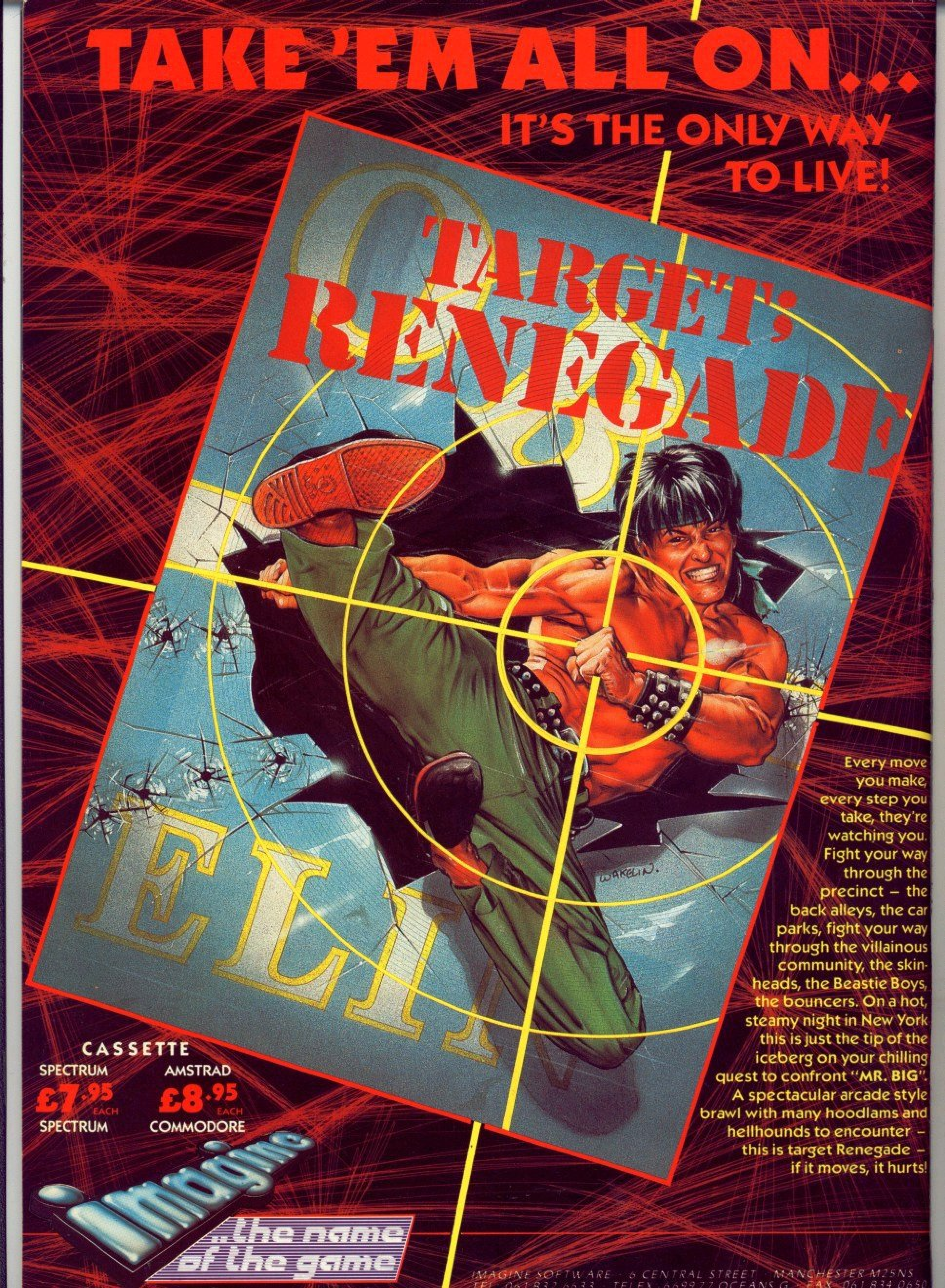
Kevin Sooben, Herts

The conversion will allow the 1901 to display the same resolution as the normal Amiga monitor; the 1081. It will also allow the display of all 4096 colours, which is probably more important. You will find that you will get the same flicker effect when using the 'interlaced' hi-res mode, but most standard monitors have this problem so you aren't losing anything there.

There is only one speaker in the 1901 so you won't get stereo sound out of it, but since the Amiga sound comes out of separate connectors at the rear you can easily take the sound through a portable cassette player which has a stereo line input to give full stereo effects.



WHEN WE LEFT LAST ISSUE OUR DUMB-ASS DUO WERE JUST GETTING FRIENDLY WITH A SQUAD OF GRAVITOUSLY VIOLENT ARCADE POLICEMEN.
WATCH WERE YOUR STICKING THAT GUN FOR GODSAKE!
FASCIST, DIRTBALL SCUMBAG, NAZIS!
Groovy Arcade Stories
MEANWHILE APPROXIMATELY ONE AND ONE HALF MILES OUTSIDE THE ARCADE..........
HOW LONG TILL WE REACH THE ARCADE?
OH I'D SAY ABOUT... 45 SECONDS PRECISELY
45 SECONDS, WOW SEEMS LIKE ONLY HALF AN HOUR AGO WE LEFT GATEWAY!
THATS BECAUSE IT WAS ONLY HALF AN HOUR AGO!
I KNEW THAT!
I KNEW THAT
JAMIE 93.
OH GOD THERE GO THE MAIN BOOSTERS!
WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MEAN?
IT MEANS WE'RE IN BIG TROUBLE AND WERE GONNA HAVE TO CRASH LAND.!....
BUT I'VE GOT TO GET TO THE ARCADE IN ONE PIECE, IM SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE BIG COLONIAL DROPSHIP COMPETITION!
WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GONNA HAPPEN TO US ELVIS?....
OH THEY'LL PROBABLY SHOOT YOU THROUGH THE HEAD AND LET ME GO, I'D EXPECT.......
WATCH OUT FOR THE BLUE GUY WITH THE FUNNY HAIRCUT?!!!
AH
AAH. LOOK OUT! THEY JUST GOT THE BLUE GUY WITH THE STUPID
HEY IAN, LOOK AT THAT OUT OF CONTROL SPACE SHIP HEADING STRAIGHT FOR US!..............
WHAT YOU MEAN THE ONE THAT JUST GOT THE WIMPOID BLUE GUY WITH THE STUPID HAIR CUT!....
DUCK!?
CRASH!
WAP!
SPLUT!
AH!
SPURT!
NEXT UP: DARLING DAISY!



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